



# **NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL**

**MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA**

## **THESIS**

**UNGOVERNED SPACES AND THE SURVIVAL OF  
TERRORIST GROUPS IN AFRICA: A CASE STUDY OF  
THE LORD'S RESISTANCE ARMY**

by

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December 2015

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AFRICA: A CASE STUDY OF THE LORD'S RESISTANCE ARMY**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Uganda's location in a region plagued by armed conflict entails ongoing security challenges. The situation becomes even more complicated when the various armed groups/insurgencies enjoy the breakdown of security, limited governance, and lack of control of vast territories where they operate. This thesis examines the role of ungoverned spaces and how they facilitate the survival of terrorist groups in Africa. It further seeks to evaluate policy prescriptions available to ameliorate the problem of ungoverned spaces.

To answer these questions, this thesis uses the Lord's Resistance Army as a case study and analyzes other violent extremist groups—Al-Shabaab, Al Qaeda in the Maghreb, and Boko Haram—in relation to ungoverned spaces. The study reveals that instability emanating from ungoverned spaces is contagious and can recur even when it appears to have been contained. Although interventions through bilateral, regional, and multilateral mechanisms may offer some orderliness in ungoverned spaces, the real solution may lie in addressing the latent causes of violence and instability. These measures include embracing democratic practices and economic empowerment, and strengthening government institutions so that states are functional—and spaces are governed.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>I.</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
A.	MAJOR RESEARCH QUESTIONS .....	2
B.	SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS .....	2
C.	LITERATURE REVIEW .....	5
1.	Ungoverned Spaces .....	7
2.	State Capacity and the Will to Counter Insurgency.....	12
D.	POTENTIAL EXPLANATIONS AND HYPOTHESES .....	14
E.	RESEARCH DESIGN .....	15
F.	THESIS OVERVIEW AND DRAFT CHAPTER OUTLINE .....	16
 <b>II.</b>	 <b>THE ORIGINS AND GROWTH OF THE LRA IN UGANDA.....</b>	 <b>17</b>
A.	HISTORICAL BACKGROUND.....	17
B.	RELIGION AND HIERARCHY IN THE LRA .....	22
C.	LRA’S TERROR IN NORTHERN UGANDA .....	24
D.	UGANDA’S ATTEMPT AT PEACE TALKS WITH THE LRA.....	26
E.	HOW UNGOVERNED SPACES AIDED THE SURVIVAL OF THE LRA IN CENTRAL AFRICA .....	28
F.	REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL APPROACHES IN COMBATING THE LRA .....	30
G.	CONCLUSION .....	32
 <b>III.</b>	 <b>ANALYSIS OF AL-SHABAAB, AQIM, AND BOKO HARAM IN RELATION TO UNGOVERNED SPACES .....</b>	 <b>35</b>
A.	AL-SHABAAB .....	35
1.	Background .....	36
2.	Al-Shabaab Organization and Leadership.....	38
3.	Al-Shabaab Terror in Somalia and East Africa.....	40
4.	Intervention by the International Community in Somalia .....	43
B.	AQIM .....	46
1.	Background .....	46
2.	Organization and Leadership of AQIM .....	47
3.	AQIM’S Terror in the Maghreb .....	50
4.	International Community Intervention in the Maghreb.....	52
C.	BOKO HARAM .....	54
1.	Background .....	55
2.	Organization and Leadership of Boko Haram.....	57

3.	Boko Haram Terror in Nigeria and Neighboring Countries.....	59
4.	International Community Response to Boko Haram.....	63
D.	CONCLUSION .....	65
IV.	EVALUATION OF POLICY FRAMEWORKS IN ADDRESSING THE PROBLEM OF UNGOVERNED SPACES .....	67
A.	LIBERALIZATION STRATEGY .....	68
B.	INSTITUTIONALIZATION STRATEGY .....	71
C.	CIVIL SOCIETY STRATEGY .....	73
D.	SECURITY STRATEGY .....	74
E.	CONCLUSION .....	77
V.	CONCLUSION .....	79
	LIST OF REFERENCES .....	81
	INITIAL DISTRIBUTION LIST .....	91

## **LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

AFRICOM	Africa Command
AIAI	Al- Itihad Al-Islami
AIS	Islamic Salvation Army
AMISOM	African Union Mission in Somalia
AQAP	Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula
AQIM	Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb
AU	African Union
AU-RTF	African Union-Regional Task Force
CAR	Central African Republic
CJTF	Civilian Joint Task Force
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration
DOD	Department of Defense
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EAAQ	East Africa Al Qaeda
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EU	European Union
FGS	Federal Government of Somalia
FIFA	International Federation of Football Association
FIS	Islamic Salvation Front
GIA	Armed Islamic Group
GSPC	Group for Salafist Preaching and Combat
HIPC	Highly Indebted Poor Countries
HSM	Holy Spirit Movement
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICGLR	International Conference on the Great Lakes Region
ICTR	International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
IEDs	Improvised Explosive Devices
IMF	International Monetary Fund

IOM	International Organization for Migration
IRA	Irish Republican Army
ISIS	Islamic State
LIFG	Libyan Islamic Fighting Group
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army
LT	Lashkar-e-Tayyiba
MINUSCA	United Nations Mission in Central African Republic
MINUSMA	UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali
MJTF	Multinational Joint Task Force
MNLA	National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad
MONUSCO	United Nations Stabilization Mission in DRC
MUJWA	Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NRA	National Resistance Army
ODM	Orange Democratic Movement
OEF-TS	Operation Enduring Freedom Trans-Sahara
PNU	Party of National Unity
PREACT	Partnership for Regional East Africa Counterterrorism
PSI	Pan Sahel Initiative
PSPSDN	Special Program for Peace Security and Development in Northern Mali
SAPS	Structural Adjustment Programs
SNM	Somali National Movement
SPLA	Sudan People's Liberation Army
SSDF	Somali Salvation Democratic Front
TFG	Transitional Federal Government
TSCTP	Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership
UIC	Union of Islamic Courts
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNAMID	United Nations Mission in Darfur
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

UNITAF	United Task Force
UNLA	Uganda National Liberation Army
UNMIS	United Nations Mission in South Sudan
UNOSOM I	UN Operation in Somalia I
UNOSOM II	UN Operation in Somalia II
UPDA	Uganda People's Democratic Army
UPDF	Uganda People's Defence Forces
UNSC	UN Security Council
U.S.	United States

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Mao Tse Tung famously noted that an insurgency is like a fish in water and once the water is denied, it cannot survive.<sup>1</sup> The water in Mao's metaphor was the active or passive support of the population. Popular support may have been essential for insurgents who were fighting for national independence in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries—it certainly mattered in Maoist uprisings in China and elsewhere. Today, however, the terrorist groups operating in Africa—mainly, the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), Al-Shabaab, Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), and Boko Haram—tend to operate regardless of the support of the broader population. Instead, they have survived because of the presence of ungoverned spaces in their areas of operation that allow them to spread their extremist ideology.<sup>2</sup>

In their book, *Ungoverned Spaces*, Trinkunas and Clunan contend that one cannot talk about ungoverned spaces without talking about failed states. They define ungoverned spaces as social, political and economic zones where states do not have effective control, which non-state actors can exploit to avoid state surveillance and undermine state sovereignty.<sup>3</sup> Clunan and Trinkunas, however, argue that when analyzing ungoverned spaces, scholars should not limit themselves to failed states alone but also consider the lack of effective sovereignty in organized and strong states like in border areas and inner cities of the United States and suburbs in France that tend to harbor criminals.<sup>4</sup>

Uganda has such troublesome border areas, a vector for instability compounded by a history of insurgencies since the 1980s. One of the longest-running of these insurgencies has been waged by the Lord's Resistance Army from 1986 to this day. This

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<sup>1</sup> Jarrod J.H. Gillam and James E. Moran, "The United States and Yemen: Coin in the Absence of a Legitimate Government" (master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2011).

<sup>2</sup> *LRA, Boko Haram, Al-Shabaab, AQIM and Other Sources of Instability in Africa: Hearing Before the Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives*. 112th Cong. 142 (2012) (statement of Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, Chairman of House Committee on Foreign Affairs): <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CHRG-112hhrg73998/pdf/CHRG-112hhrg73998.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> Ann L. Clunan and Harold A. Trinkunas, *Ungoverned Spaces: Alternatives to State Authority in an Era of Softened Sovereignty* (Redwood City, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010), 3.

<sup>4</sup> Clunan and Trinkunas, *Ungoverned Spaces*, 18.

terrorist group currently operates in Sudan, South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and the Central African Republic (CAR). The geographical location of Uganda in a neighborhood plagued by enduring armed conflict compounds the problem of eradicating such an armed group due to the breakdown of security and lack of control of vast territories in those countries. By Clunan and Trinkunas' definition, the ungoverned spaces in and around Uganda present a particular security challenge.

## **A. MAJOR RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

This thesis addresses two research questions. First, to what extent has the persistence of ungoverned spaces contributed to the survival of terrorist groups in Africa? Second, how is Uganda addressing the problem of ungoverned spaces within its neighborhood?

## **B. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The United States realized early in the 1990s that security threats could emanate from weak, failing, and ungoverned spaces. In his book *Global Strategic Assessment 2009: America's Security Role in a Changing World*, Patrick Cronin cautions that ungoverned spaces should not only be taken to mean isolated regions of inhospitable terrain where governments cannot reach. He notes that if this were the case, we would be concerned only with the tribal territories along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border, or the Khmer Rouge areas in Cambodia, or the eastern part of the DRC. Cronin counsels that ungoverned spaces "exist not only in fragile, failing and failed states but also in" migrant and immigrant populated slums and inaccessible border regions of well governed states.<sup>5</sup>

Regions however, that are contested and endemic with conflict offer terrorists and insurgents bases from which to organize, recruit, train, and launch attacks—at home, in the region, and against U.S. interests abroad—as well as exporting terror cells. According to Clunan and Trinkunas, this terrorism not only threatens global security but also, in the long run, undermines principles of "good governance in the international system, respect

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<sup>5</sup> Patrick M. Cronin, *Global Strategic Assessment 2009: America's Security Role in a Changing World* (Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 2009), 101.

for human rights and the rule of law.”<sup>6</sup> Such conflicts lead to flows of refugees and thriving criminal networks associated with the various warring parties in the conflicts.<sup>7</sup>

Studies carried out in the Horn of Africa between 1992 and 2006 suggested that the region’s weak states—as opposed to its failed ones—provided the most potential for terrorist threats. For example, these studies indicated that Al Qaeda found failed states like Somalia unfavorable and hostile as bases of operation. Some scholars went so far as to claim that some governments in the region, notably Kenya, used their stance against terrorism to attract donors and military assistance from the West, whether or not the threat was especially pressing or probable.<sup>8</sup>

Subsequent events, however, have indicated that the vacuum of power and order in Somalia allowed Al-Shabaab, a U.S.-designated foreign terrorist organization, to merge with Al Qaeda, a union which made the Shabaab more sophisticated and dangerous in the employment of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and guerilla tactics. Al-Shabaab was also reported to have carried out fund-raising activities in the United States at the same time, maintaining links with Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP).<sup>9</sup> On July 12, 2010, Al-Shabaab sprang from its bases in Somalia and struck in the region when the group bombed Kampala, killing more than 74 people who were watching the World Cup finals.<sup>10</sup> The group staged another macabre attack when it killed more than 60 people at the Nairobi Westgate Mall on September 21, 2013.<sup>11</sup> The group continues to carry out terrorist attacks in Somalia and East Africa.

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<sup>6</sup>Clunan and Trinkunas, *Ungoverned Spaces*, 26.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ken Menkhaus and Jacob N. Shapiro, “Non-State Actors and Failed States: Lessons from Al-Qaeda’s Experiences in the Horn of Africa,” in *Ungoverned Spaces: Alternatives to State Authority in an Era of Softened Sovereignty*, ed. Ann L. Clunan and Harold A. Trinkunas (California: Stanford University Press, 2010), 79.

<sup>9</sup> *LRA, Boko Haram, Al-Shabaab, AQIM and Other Sources of Instability in Africa*.

<sup>10</sup> “Somali Link as 74 World Cup Fans Die in Uganda Blasts,” BBC, July 12, 2010, <http://www.bbc.com/news/10593771>.

<sup>11</sup> “Somalia’s Al-Shabaab Claims Nairobi Westgate Kenya Attack,” BBC, September 22, 2013, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-24191606>.

Similarly, the Lord's Resistance Army still carries out atrocities against civilians in the Central African Republic, Sudan, South Sudan, and the DRC as well. It has been an issue of interest on how an insurgency that started in 1986 in northern Uganda in what appeared as an attempt to regain state power could eventually spread to four countries if the LRA wanted political power only in Uganda. The LRA is an offshoot of the various rebellions that broke out in 1986 after Yoweri Museveni captured power after a five-year war. When the National Resistance Army (NRA) of Museveni defeated the Uganda National Liberation Army (UNLA) of Tito Okello, the UNLA retreated to Sudan. The UNLA forces, however, mobilized with support from Sudan's government and attacked the northern Uganda border areas in 1986.<sup>12</sup>

The UNLA later transformed into the Holy Spirit Movement (HSM) led by Alice Lakwena. Lakwena was defeated in 1987 and fled to Kenya. It is at this period that Joseph Kony mobilized the remnants of the Lakwena forces into the LRA. Kony declared that his aim was to overthrow the government of Museveni and rule Uganda based on the biblical Ten Commandments.<sup>13</sup> Between 1987 and 2006, the LRA kept moving to and from Sudan to carry out attacks in Uganda. During this period, thousands of civilians in northern Uganda were massacred, and over 10,000 children abducted by the LRA. The Ugandan government also engaged the group in a series of peace talks that never materialized. It was in 2006 that the group relocated to the DRC and later scattered to Sudan, South Sudan, and the Central African Republic, where it still operates.<sup>14</sup>

The LRA may not pose a direct threat to the United States, but the group's activities in Central Africa have been a concern to the U.S. policy makers interested in improving regional security and peace building. To this end, on November 24, 2010, President Barack Obama spelled out the U.S. counter-LRA strategic plan to Congress.

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<sup>12</sup> Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, *Sowing the Mustard Seed: The Struggle for Freedom and Democracy in Uganda* (Kampala, Uganda: Moran Publishers, 2010), 180.

<sup>13</sup> Issaka K. Souare, "The International Criminal Court and African Conflicts: The Case of Uganda," *Review of African Political Economy* 36, no. 121 (2009): 369–88, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03056240903211083>.

<sup>14</sup> Jonathan Fisher, "Framing Kony: Uganda's War, Obama's Advisers and the Nature of 'Influence' in Western Foreign Policy Making," *Third World Quarterly* 35, no. 4 (2014): 686–704. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2014.924068>.

The objectives of the strategic plan included: “(a) increase protection of civilians; (b) apprehend or remove from the battlefield Joseph Kony and senior commanders; (c) promote the defection, disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of remaining LRA fighters; and (d) increase humanitarian access and provide continued relief to affected communities.”<sup>15</sup> Subsequently, in 2012, the United States deployed around 100 troops in the Central African Republic to partner with the African Union Regional Task Force (AU-RTF) in operations to eliminate the LRA.<sup>16</sup> Without such sustained pressure, the LRA has the potential to destabilize a wider region.

### C. LITERATURE REVIEW

There are different bodies of literature that deal with the ungoverned spaces. One such body of literature as expounded by Beckett and others focuses on the relationship between terrorist groups and ungoverned spaces. For example, Beckett notes that in societies or regions “where the state system has remained underdeveloped—as in many parts of Africa, Asia and Latin America”—insurgencies tend to be prevalent. He observes that out of 55 conflicts that were ongoing in 2001, “40 percent were in Africa; 35 percent, in Asia; and 15 percent, in the Middle East.”<sup>17</sup> He mentions other facilitating factors for insurgencies like “difficult terrain (mountain, desert, forest, swamp, and jungle)” especially when this terrain has been mastered by the rebels. External support and young unemployed populations are also considered as enabling factors for insurgents.<sup>18</sup> This line of investigation indicates that if such regions were stable and well managed, then terrorists would not thrive.

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<sup>15</sup> Andre LeSage, *Countering the Lord’s Resistance Army in Central Africa*, *Strategic Forum*, no. 270 (Washington, DC: National Defense University, July 2011) <http://ndupress.ndu.edu/Portals/68/Documents/stratforum/SF-270.pdf>.

<sup>16</sup> Surdasan Raghavan and Craig Whitlock, “The Hunt for Joseph Kony, Elusive African Warlord, Is Halted,” *Washington Post*, April 3, 2013, [http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/hunt-for-elusive-african-warlord-halted/2013/04/03/833cc0dc-9c81-11e2-9219-51eb8387e8f1\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/hunt-for-elusive-african-warlord-halted/2013/04/03/833cc0dc-9c81-11e2-9219-51eb8387e8f1_story.html).

<sup>17</sup> Ian Beckett, “The Future of Insurgency,” *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 16, no. 1 (2005): 22–36, <http://dx.doi.org/1080/0959231042000322549>.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

Arsenault and Bacon also highlight factors that may encourage terrorist groups to thrive, including ungoverned spaces, by quoting the 2006 U.S. National Security Strategy:

Regional conflicts can arise from a wide variety of causes, including poor governance, external aggression, competing claims, internal revolt, tribal rivalries, and ethnic or religious hatred. If left unaddressed, however, these different causes lead to the same: failed states, humanitarian disasters, and ungoverned areas that can become safe havens for terrorists.<sup>19</sup>

To be sure, other scholars argue that considering the U.S. intervention in Iraq and Afghanistan after 9/11 and the state in which these two countries and the region find themselves today, the premise of ungoverned spaces and terrorism proliferation is a fallacy. David Oakley and Pat Proctor, in their article, “Ten Years of GWOT, the Failure of Democratization, and the Fallacy of ‘Ungoverned Spaces,’” acknowledge that while Afghanistan was used to launch terrorist attacks on the United States a decade and a half ago, contemporary terrorist organizations who have exposure to available modern means of communication might not need Afghanistan as a country to build their terror machinery.<sup>20</sup> They quote Marc Sageman’s book *Leaderless Jihad*, for example, to argue that in its operations, Al Qaeda does not derive its power from the dominance of territory, but rather from its ability to command a large following using various media channels like videos and the Internet.<sup>21</sup> The authors further note that “terrorist organizations operating out of remote and truly ungoverned areas would have great difficulty communicating with subordinates or anyone else.”<sup>22</sup> In other words, a weak or failing state may no longer offer insurgencies or terrorists groups what they seek in a base of operations.

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<sup>19</sup> Elizabeth Grimm Arsenault and Tricia Bacon, “Disaggregating and Defeating Terrorist Safe Havens,” *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 38, no. 2 (2015): 85–112, <http://dx.org/10.1080/1057610X.2014.977605>.

<sup>20</sup> David Oakley and Patrick Proctor, “Ten Years of GWOT, the Failure of Democratization and the Fallacy of ‘Ungoverned Spaces,’” *Journal of Strategic Security* 5, no. 1 (2012): 1–14, <http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/jss/vol5/iss1/5>.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid. See also Marc Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad: Terrorist Networks in the Twenty-First Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008).

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

On the other hand, terrorist groups like Islamic State (ISIS)<sup>23</sup> and Boko Haram<sup>24</sup> have some territories under their control and are intent on creating “caliphates,” which in essence entail the control and administration of large territories. The LRA also clearly makes use of the gaps in lawful control of the territory through which it ranges to mount its attacks and sustain its members.

As such, this study proceeds from the starting assertion that territory and control matter in twenty-first-century counterterrorism and counterinsurgency. In this connection, this section examines the use of the term “ungoverned spaces,” the link between failed states and ungoverned spaces, and the importance of the state’s will to counter insurgency. It goes on to explore the perhaps key factor in addressing ungoverned spaces and the security problems they foster: state capacity and the will to counter insurgency.

## **1. Ungoverned Spaces**

There are various factors likely to favor the growth and thriving of terrorist groups in Africa, which have been captured by the literature. According to Robert Feldman,<sup>25</sup> such factors include large unemployed populations of youths who are likely to fall prey to terrorist recruiters, haphazard borders that are poorly manned, and the proliferation of arms due to unending conflicts and poor governance, among others. Within this context, scholars note that in the current major insurgencies on the African continent from Somalia to Nigeria, and from Mali to the Central African Republic, the problem of ungoverned spaces also seems to play a central role. Indeed, Elizabeth Arsenault and Tricia Bacon prefer to call ungoverned spaces “safe havens.” They further note how various other scholars perceive ungoverned spaces.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Graeme Wood, “What ISIS Really Wants,” *Atlantic*, March 2015. <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2015/03/what-isis-really-wants/384980/>.

<sup>24</sup> Farouk Chouthia, “Who Are Nigeria’s Boko Haram Islamists?” BBC, May 4, 2015. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-13809501>.

<sup>25</sup> Robert L. Feldman, “The Root Causes of Terrorism: Why Parts of Africa Might Never Be at Peace,” *Defense and Security Analysis* 25, no. 4 (2009): 355–72, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14751790903416707>.

<sup>26</sup> Arsenault and Bacon, “Disaggregating and Defeating Terrorist Safe Havens,” 87-88.

For example, they mention Rem Korteweg's definition of "terrorist sanctuaries" in his work on "Black Holes" as "areas in which non-state militant organizations are able to undertake activities in support of terrorist operations," while Cristiana C.B. Kittner's scholarship defines them as "geographic spaces where Islamic terrorists are able to successfully establish an organization and operation base to conduct activities."<sup>27</sup> In this regard, it is important therefore "to understand havens as places in which terrorist groups can operate without fear of counter terror retaliation or pressure" from governments.<sup>28</sup>

Furthermore, Arsenault and Bacon note that although the U.S. government has a variety of definitions of "safe havens," all these definitions point to one maxim "that safe havens exist where groups have freedom to undertake core support activities with relative security or limited fear of counterterrorism action."<sup>29</sup> For example, the two scholars quote President Barack Obama in one of his addresses in 2013 on terrorists and safe havens:

I am very concerned about Syria becoming an enclave for extremists, because extremists thrive in chaos. They thrive in failed states. They thrive in power vacuums. They don't have much to offer when it comes to actually building things, but they're very good about exploiting situations that are no longer functioning. They fill that gap.<sup>30</sup>

So the problem, from Arsenault and Bacon's perspective, is less that U.S. policy makers fail to recognize safe havens as a problem. Rather, they argue, the wrong prescriptions might be applied if the typology of these safe havens is not known. They argue that sanctuaries are three pronged; government-enabled, government-sponsored, and those that are contested.

Arsenault and Bacon note that although multiple definitions of weak states exist, it is a common ground that all these weak states experience "systemic weakness." They therefore posit that "fragile states, crisis states, post conflict states, failing states, and failed states" all translate to three key features that characterize weak states. These

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<sup>27</sup> Arsenault and Bacon, "Disaggregating and Defeating Terrorist Safe Havens."

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 87.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 85.



include: “(1) a government’s inability or refusal to ensure security within and on its borders; (2) a failure to provide basic services to the populace; and (3) a lack of legitimacy among the populace.”<sup>31</sup> In these conditions, non-state actors find an enabling environment to operate from.<sup>32</sup>

Under the government-enabled sanctuary, the state may have limited capacity to deny a safe haven to a terrorist group, while at the same time being supportive of its sanctuary if the state has used the terrorist group before as a proxy. This situation is exemplified by the Pakistani Lashkar-e-Tayyiba (LT), operating in the Kashmir territory against India. The government-sponsored sanctuary implies that the government could deny a terrorist group sanctuary, but it decides not to. Sudan has supported such groups before. In the case of the contested sanctuary, the government may oppose the terrorist group within its territory but lack the necessary means to eradicate that group. “The Afghan Taliban and Islamic Court Union’s takeovers in Afghanistan and Somalia respectively” offer appropriate examples.<sup>33</sup>

According to Arsenault and Bacon, the typologies each necessitate a particular approach to combating such terrorist groups. They argue that in government-enabled havens, the United States could apply targeted sanctions, while in government-sponsored havens, the United States could use aerial strikes or regime change. In contested havens, they add, the United States can provide capacity building to the country affected or support military interventions by other governments to get rid of the terrorist group.<sup>34</sup>

In their book, *Fixing Failed States: A Framework for Rebuilding a Fractured World*, Ghani and Lockhart link ungoverned spaces with lack of effective state institutions. Specifically, they contend that “an effective state is necessary for the solution of both local and global problems” and observe that for the past 40 years, Africa has had difficulties in security, political, and economic spheres emanating from weak governance

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 88.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Arsenault and Bacon provide a detailed explanation of these concepts in their article, 93-101.

<sup>34</sup> Arsenault and Bacon, “Disaggregating and Defeating Terrorist Safe Havens.”

and the absence of an effective state.<sup>35</sup> They argue that these problems are not limited to Africa—they note that other countries like Haiti, East Timor, Afghanistan, Iraq, and Nepal, among others, fall in the same category and warn that failure by the international community to fix these states spells doom for the rest of the world. According to Ghani and Lockhart:

State failures that the rich countries used to be able to ignore can thus no longer be overlooked. Intrastate and interstate conflict, drug rings, and the smuggling of arms, timber, antiquities, and precious stones—combined with money laundering and the large-scale, speedy financial transactions made possible by globalization—are resulting in an agile and flexible complex of networks that mostly thwart any attempt to create order. ... Criminal networks are making their way into the first world, with consequences of increased violence, human trafficking, and, at worst, the threat of terrorism.<sup>36</sup>

Zaitseva also argues that ungoverned spaces and failed states can both serve in acquisition and trafficking of radioactive materials and the devices made with these materials.<sup>37</sup> She gives an example of the DRC, which is a uranium-rich African country that ranks sixth on the List of Failed States Index of 2008. The DRC has been visited by North Koreans and other foreign nationals who investigated the possibilities of exporting uranium from a closed mine in Katanga province.<sup>38</sup> This incident indicates the gravity of the problem of ungoverned spaces and failed states in undermining national and international security.

Other scholars like Ken Menkhaus, though, acknowledge that ungoverned spaces and state failure are interrelated; he argues that the problem is over-hyped by policy makers. Menkhaus contends that where state failure has occurred as in Afghanistan, the DRC, and Somalia, the communities in such states are not merely passive victims of state failure and collapse. The communities can forge systems of security, law, deterrence of

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<sup>35</sup> Ashraf Ghani and Clare Lockhart, *Fixing Failed States: A Framework for Rebuilding a Fractured World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 26–27.

<sup>36</sup> Ghani and Lockhart, *Fixing Failed States*, 23.

<sup>37</sup> Lyudmila Zaitseva, “Nuclear Trafficking in Ungoverned Spaces and Failed States,” in *Ungoverned Spaces: Alternatives to State Authority in an Era of Softened Sovereignty*, ed. Ann L. Clunan and Harold A. Trinkunas (Redwood City, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010), 193.

<sup>38</sup> Zaitseva, “Nuclear Trafficking in Ungoverned Spaces and Failed States,” 204.

crime, conflict management, and mutual support, offering services including armed neighborhood watch groups.<sup>39</sup> Menkhaus says that sometimes terrorists are able to organize and carry out attacks in weak states but not necessarily failed ones.

He gives the Horn of Africa as an example. Menkhaus argues that when East Africa Al Qaeda (EAAQ) operatives ventured into Somalia in 1990s, they found it insecure and divided on clans, which posed a logistical challenge for them to operate as foreigners. They instead put cells in Kenya, which was a weak, corrupt, but functional state, and it is from there that they were able to spring up and bomb U.S. embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam in 1998.<sup>40</sup>

Menkhaus' argument is logically right, but it does not take into consideration the long-term agenda of terrorists and their desire to create "provinces" that they can use to destabilize the world. The current trends in ISIS operations indicate that various groups like Boko Haram in Nigeria and Ansar Bayt al Maqdis in Egypt have declared affiliation to the Islamic State, while at the same time fighting their home governments.<sup>41</sup>

Ian Beckett also puts it clearly that in modern conflict, "the key to insurgency success is no longer the ability to wage protracted warfare, but the ability to establish a base rapidly and move on the capital city, which is the only focus of power in so many states in the developing world."<sup>42</sup> Based on Beckett's observation, there is no doubt that Al Qaeda-linked Al-Shabaab at some period controlled Mogadishu and wanted to take over the whole of Somalia. It was the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) that stopped them.<sup>43</sup> This episode demonstrates a changing trend in strategy especially propagated by ISIS and other like-minded terrorist groups as observed by Byman, where control and expansion of territory is becoming a norm. This change in approach, Byman

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<sup>39</sup> Ken Menkhaus, "Chapter Nine: State Failure and Ungoverned Space," *Adelphi Series* 50, no. 412–413 (2010): 171–888, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/19445571.2010.515155>.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 187.

<sup>41</sup> Daniel Byman, *Terrorism in Africa: The Imminent Threat to the United States* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 2015), <http://www.brookings.edu/~media/research/files/testimony/2015/04/29-terrorism-in-africa-byman/byman-aq-v-is-hsc-042315.pdf>.

<sup>42</sup> Beckett, "Future of Insurgency."

<sup>43</sup> "AMISOM Mandate," African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), n.d., <http://amisom-au.org/amisom-mandate/>.

adds, is ideological in that by creating an Islamic state under Islamic law, many followers get inspiration and embrace the group. Besides controlling a territory, the group can build an army and use the same army for further expansion.<sup>44</sup>

There are other scholars who have approached the issue of ungoverned spaces in a broader way to include cyberspace, outer space, maritime, and airspace. Though these spaces have national and international legal frameworks to govern them, the nature of their existence and usage create loopholes, thus creating areas of contest. Scott Jasper and Paul Giarra have called the four spaces *global commons*—the term that originates from the old English law that refers to “a tract of ground shared by residents of a village, belonging to no one, and held for the good of all.”<sup>45</sup> Jasper and Giarra argue that whereas the global commons facilitate physically and virtually “free flow of trade, finance, information, people and technology in the world’s economic system,” they at the same time aid “transfer of advanced weapons and military technology; the spread of ideas and ideologies; the movement and communication of criminals and terrorists; and the diversion of dangerous materials.”<sup>46</sup> The two scholars counsel that a defense approach that identifies the capabilities required to counter such threats should be in place to foster such a security environment.

## **2. State Capacity and the Will to Counter Insurgency**

There is another body of literature that highlights state capacity and the will to counter terrorist groups in certain countries. For example, Stewart Patrick notes that “states lacking effective economic institutions are more likely to suffer from stagnant growth, breed political extremism and be unable to regulate terrorist financing.”<sup>47</sup> He notes, however, that in an effort to strengthen states that are tending toward failure and shield them from transnational terrorism, policy makers should differentiate between

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<sup>44</sup> Byman, *Terrorism in Africa*.

<sup>45</sup> Scott Jasper and Paul Giarra, “Disruptions in the Commons,” in *Securing Freedom in the Global Commons*, ed. Scott Jasper (Redwood City, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010), 2.

<sup>46</sup> Jasper and Giarra, “Disruptions in the Commons,” 2–3.

<sup>47</sup> Stewart Patrick, “Weak States and Global Threats: Fact of Fiction?” *Washington Quarterly* 29, no. 2 (2006): 27–53.

capacities and will. He argues that whereas countries, in the Sahel region or East Africa, for example, may be willing to fight terrorism, they might lack the tools to do so, while countries like Pakistan and Saudi Arabia may lack the determination to tackle jihad groups in their countries for fear of upsetting already radicalized populations.<sup>48</sup>

In light of this argument, it becomes clear that ungoverned spaces—whether in states that are willing or not willing to be helped in eliminating terrorist groups from such spaces—remain potential security threats for the afflicted states, the regions where they are located, and the international community. Patrick calls such states *bad neighbors*—where state structures have collapsed and the borders are porous and can export violence, refugees, political instability, and economic disorganization to other states in their vicinity.<sup>49</sup>

The same argument is further highlighted by Ray Takeyh and Nikolas Gvosdev when they assert that “today’s terrorist does not need a strong state to provide funding and supplies. Rather, it seeks a weak state that cannot impede a group’s freedom of action but has the veneer of state sovereignty that prevents other, stronger states from taking effective countermeasures.”<sup>50</sup>

Similarly, in their discussion on fixing failed states, Ghani and Lockhart propose a framework based on what they call the ten functions of the state that complement each other for the state to be sound. These functions include “a monopoly of the legitimate means of violence; administrative control; sound management of public finances; investment in human capital; creation of citizenship rights through social policy; provision of infrastructure services; formation of a market; management of public assets; effective public borrowing; and the sovereignty dividend and the sovereignty gap.”<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Ray Takeyh and Nikolas K. Gvosdev, “Do Terrorist Networks Need a Home?” in *Terrorism and Counterterrorism: Understanding the New Security Environment*, ed. Russell D. Howard and Bruce Hoffman (Boston: McGraw Hill, 2009), 79.

<sup>51</sup> Ghani and Lockhart discuss the 10 functions of the state in detail in Chapter 7 of their book, *Fixing Failed States*.

A failed state cannot realize these functions on its own, however, and that is where intervention measures come into play. Ulrich Schneckener identifies four strategies that are usually undertaken by international organizations, transnational NGOs, and third-party states in the stabilization process of failed states. He names these strategies as “Liberalization First, Security First, Institutionalization First, and Civil Society First.”<sup>52</sup> Schneckener explains that each one of these strategies is always chosen first unconsciously during the period of intervention because internally each strategy has its advocates in different administrative units such as ministries, departments, or agencies of the United Nations. He argues that each strategy has its strength and weaknesses but though not mutually exclusive, are rather complementary and interdependent, and the success of them all relies on implementation.<sup>53</sup>

#### **D. POTENTIAL EXPLANATIONS AND HYPOTHESES**

Andrew Mack, in his work, “Why Big Nations Lose Small Wars: The Politics of Asymmetric Conflict,” states that in guerrilla warfare, “the ‘people sea’ forms a sanctuary of popular support for the ‘guerrilla fish.’”<sup>54</sup> Mack gives the American war in Vietnam of 1968 as an example of the “people sea,” implying that in guerrilla warfare, the guerrilla army can decide to buy time as long as they have the support of the population, which in the long run could lead them to victory.<sup>55</sup>

He also gives the example of the Algerian war of independence against France between 1954 and 1962, which also features in the people power theory. Terrorism was used as a weapon against France, forcing it to react with an iron hand, thus achieving for

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<sup>52</sup> Ulrich Schneckener, “State Building or New Modes of Governance? The Effects of International Involvement in Areas of Limited Statehood,” in *Governance without a State?: Policies and Politics in Areas of Limited Statehood*, ed. Thomas Risse (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 236. Schneckener explains state-building strategies thus: Liberalization First (This strategy emphasizes improvement in areas like democracy and the economy of the state). Security First (This strategy on the other hand puts emphasis on the improvement of coercive arms of the state like the army and police). Institutionalization First (This strategy advocates for the empowerment of state institutions like parliament and the judiciary). Civil Society First (This strategy focuses on the proper functioning of non-governmental organizations).

<sup>53</sup> Schneckener, “State Building or New Modes of Governance?,” 235.

<sup>54</sup> Andrew Mack, “Why Big Nations Lose Small Wars: The Politics of Asymmetric Conflict,” *World Politics* 27, no. 2 (1975): 177.

<sup>55</sup> Mack, “Why Big Nations Lose Small Wars,” 178.

the Algerian rebels what they had been unable to achieve themselves: “the political mobilization of the masses against the French.”<sup>56</sup> Unlike the Maoist type, the contemporary insurgents that sprung up especially after the end of Cold War have transformed into transnational terrorist networks that operate across state borders. Such groups tend to rely heavily on the use of violence against civilians for purposes ranging from attracting attention, coerced support, and sometimes a draconian response from governments.<sup>57</sup>

The LRA, which started its rebellion in Uganda in 1986, had used Sudan as a launch pad. Other rebel groups which operated in northern Uganda like the Uganda People’s Democratic Army (UPDA) and the Holy Spirit Movement either were defeated or surrendered but not the LRA. Is it not possible that what motivated LRA to carry on with the war was getting support from the Sudan government in the form of arms and bases?<sup>58</sup> It is therefore plausible to contend that the LRA could have been neutralized in its infancy, like other armed groups that emerged in the 1980s in northern Uganda, had it not been the presence of ungoverned spaces that played in its favor.

In addition, as it is reflected in the literature review, various factors like unemployment of young populations, porous borders, religious extremism and bad governance, among other factors, are always at play in the growth and survival of terrorist groups in areas that they operate from. This study does not imply that ungoverned spaces are the ultimate or most important factor in this phenomenon. The study, however, examines the role of ungoverned spaces, which seems critical to understanding the dynamics of the survival of terrorist groups.

## **E. RESEARCH DESIGN**

In an effort to determine the extent to which ungoverned spaces contribute to the survival of terrorist organizations in Africa, I observe and examine how the LRA has

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 181.

<sup>57</sup> Anthony Vinci, *Armed Groups and the Balance of Power: The International Relations of Terrorists, Warlords and Insurgents* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 4.

<sup>58</sup> Anthony Vinci, “Existential Motivations in the Lord’s Resistance Army’s Continuing Conflict,” *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 30, no. 4 (2007): 337–52, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10576100701200173>.

utilized the ungoverned spaces from its inception up to the present and how this utilization has helped it to survive. I also analyze the three terrorist organizations—that is, Al-Shabaab, AQIM, and Boko Haram—that share most of the essential features as those of the LRA. The analysis of these terrorist organizations provides a wider scope in understanding the role of ungoverned spaces among other factors in the survival of terrorist groups in Africa. In addition, I also use other scholarly information that is related to my study, policy documents, and think tank and NGO reports that highlight the impact of these terrorist groups in areas of their operation and policy approaches that have been employed to address the threats.

## **F. THESIS OVERVIEW AND DRAFT CHAPTER OUTLINE**

The thesis comprises five chapters. The first chapter includes the introduction, with background information on insurgents, state failure, and ungoverned spaces and how the three relate to each other. The second chapter contains an examination of how the LRA has utilized ungoverned spaces to survive from its inception up to date. In the third chapter, an analysis of three terrorist groups is presented, with a focus on Al-Shabaab, AQIM, and Boko Haram. In this analysis, besides ungoverned spaces, a number of factors that have enabled survival of these groups are examined, including state weakness/failure, territorial usage, organizational leadership, military organization, internal and external support, motivation and survival/self-preservation.

Subsequently, Chapter Four focuses on the evaluation of policy frameworks that have been put in place to address the problem of ungoverned spaces. And finally, Chapter Five synthesizes the findings of the study and suggests how they can inform policy and strategy in neutralizing terrorist groups in Africa.



## **II. THE ORIGINS AND GROWTH OF THE LRA IN UGANDA**

Uganda currently enjoys a peaceful security environment throughout its territory, but this peacefulness is a relatively recent achievement. In 2006, the national army—Uganda People’s Defence Forces (UPDF)—managed to push the LRA from northern Uganda, heralding this new pacific phase. For its part, the rebel group relocated to the DRC, continuing its exploitation of ungoverned spaces, now outside Uganda’s national borders.

Especially in the 1980s, Uganda itself represented an ungoverned or, at best, a weakly governed space. Amid this lack of effective state control, the LRA thrived. It thrived because Uganda was emerging from a long history of instability, and South Sudan had been at war with North Sudan since the 1980s. These two situations played a vital role in the growth of the LRA, because it used ungoverned spaces that existed in South Sudan and a nascent security apparatus in Uganda that at the time could not eliminate the group. This chapter, therefore, examines and observes how ungoverned spaces aided the spread and survival of the LRA in Central Africa, the survival dynamics employed by the group through exploitation of ungoverned spaces, and approaches in combating it at national, regional, and international levels.

### **A. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

Uganda’s struggles with governability have historic roots. During British rule, Uganda was divided into territories—the Bantu from the south and the Nilotic from the north. The British considered people from northern Uganda as martial and fit for armed forces and physical labor, while those from the south were held to be more apt for civil service, as they had benefited early in education offered by missionaries. The colonial leadership administered the territory according to these cherished stereotypes, in keeping with the British penchant for “divide and conquer.”<sup>59</sup> Indeed, during the colonial period,

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<sup>59</sup> Juma Okuku, *Ethnicity, State Power and the Democratization Process in Uganda* (Uppsala, Sweden: University Printers 2002), 11–12, <https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=Nokyosqm68C&oi=fnd&pg=PA7&dq=divide+and+rule+by+the+colonialists+in+uganda>.

there was an unwritten rule that soldiers must hail from the north, civil servants must be from the south, and Asians were to run businesses.<sup>60</sup> For the 68 years of the British rule, divide and rule in Uganda capitalized on the ethnic diversity in the country. This division was meant to ease administration of the colony.

After independence in 1962, this division persisted and, indeed, affected the integration of Uganda as nation. Uganda's first prime minister was Milton Obote from the north. Under his rule, by 1969, the northerners, who accounted for 19 percent of the population, comprised 61 percent of the army.<sup>61</sup> At the same time, the Baganda, who come from central Uganda, constituted only five percent of the Ugandan army, although they represented more than 16 percent of the population. This kind of imbalance was the same in the police force that had been built by the colonial government. For example in 1961, a year before independence, 15.5 percent of the police force was from Acholi (northern region)—even though the Acholi represented 4.4 percent of the country's population. The Iteso (north east) made up 15.2 percent of the force but just 8.1 percent of the population. The Langi (northern region) constituted 7.5 percent of the force but only 5.6 percent of the general population. Meanwhile, no single southern or Bantu-speaking group constituted more than 5 percent of the police force. This imbalance in numbers was echoed in the correctional and secret services.<sup>62</sup>

Obote was content to continue with this mal-distribution because by that time, the coercive elements of the state were used as a means to maintain political power. Those who controlled the means of violence were able to dictate terms to those who were not armed.<sup>63</sup> Ultimately, this imbalance created social disorder, which, in the long run, bred violence.

In 1971, in a military coup, Obote's army commander Idi Amin—from the northwest of Uganda—took over the country. Amin set about eliminating Obote's ethnic

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> A.B.K. Kasozi, *The Social Origins of Violence in Uganda* (Kampala, Uganda: Fountain Publishers Ltd., 1994), 51.

<sup>62</sup> Kasozi, *The Social Origins of Violence*, 54.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 55.

constituency, who were rivals amid the colonial divisions, especially from the armed forces. Amin carried out targeted killings mainly from Obote's region; later on, however, the killings spread to other parts of the country to include any other Ugandans who opposed Amin. Despite Amin's authoritarian pretensions, Uganda was, in these years, ungoverned in the sense that the rule of law was largely absent. For the eight years that Amin ruled Uganda, he ruled by decree. All political institutions such as parliament and district and town councils were suspended and all political activities banned.<sup>64</sup>

During his second year in office, he expelled all Asians from Uganda, even though they demonstrably formed the engine of Uganda's economy, dominating the commercial and industrial class. The Asians who were affected by the expulsion numbered about 75,000 of Indo-Pakistani origin, some of which held British passports; the majority were Ugandan citizens since they had been born in Uganda to migrant parents.<sup>65</sup> This community of Asians used to run shops, large-scale farms, and plantations of sugar, tea, and other enterprises. Indeed the expulsion of Asians led to total economic breakdown, including lack of essential basic commodities like sugar, soap, and salt throughout the country. Amin pursued his paranoid domestic policies with increasing—and increasingly lethal—vigor. It is estimated that by the time Amin was overthrown, he had killed around 300,000 people in his eight-year rule.<sup>66</sup>

The political opposition to Amin that existed was therefore largely those living in exile. The majority of them were based in Tanzania, including Obote. By 1978, the tension between Uganda and Tanzania was high as Amin accused President Julius Nyerere of supporting dissidents against his government. When Amin's army later attacked the Tanzanian border town of Mutukula, claiming to repulse Ugandan dissidents, the Tanzanian army responded forcefully and swiftly.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 114.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 119.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 104.

<sup>67</sup> Bernard Rwehururu, *Cross to the Gun: Idi Amin and the Fall of the Uganda Army*, 3rd ed., (Kampala, Uganda: Net Media Publishers Ltd, 2008). In this book, Rwehururu, who served as an army officer in Amin's army, gives an account of events that led to the Mutukula fight and eventual defeat of Amin's regime by a combination of Ugandan exiles and Tanzanian army.

Amin was overthrown in 1979 by a combined force of Ugandan refugees and the Tanzanian army. The defeat of Amin by the Tanzanian army and Ugandan refugees was received with relief both locally and internationally because Amin had turned Uganda into a failed state. His departure was seen as an opportunity to restore a collapsed state. Obote became president again in 1980, but the process did not restore peace and stability to Uganda. The elections that brought Obote to power were thought to have been rigged. Yoweri Museveni was among the presidential candidates in this disputed election. Aggrieved at the outcome of the vote, Museveni immediately inaugurated a guerrilla war in central Uganda that dragged on for five years between Museveni's National Resistance Army (NRA) and the government force—Uganda National Liberation Army (UNLA).

In 1985, the government army, divided and fatigued by the insurgency, overthrew Obote again in an effort to establish peace and restore stability to Uganda. Obote's army commander, Tito Okello, also from northern Uganda, became the president and tried to negotiate with Museveni. The Nairobi Peace Talks between Okello and Museveni were mediated by Kenyan president Daniel arap Moi. At the time of these talks, Museveni forces controlled much of central and western Uganda while UNLA controlled Kampala, east, and northern Uganda. Unlike Museveni, who had full control of the guerrilla forces that he had commanded for five years, some of Okello's sections of the army were involved in looting and killing people in and around Kampala. The behavior of Okello's army became an issue during the peace talks as Museveni threatened that whereas he had signed the Nairobi accord, he would not hesitate to continue fighting if looting and killing of civilians by the government army did not stop.<sup>68</sup> Second, though the Nairobi accord had guaranteed Museveni 50 percent of the seats on the ruling Supreme Council of Okello, Museveni was skeptical about the deal because he did not want to associate with a group that was considered sectarian and neocolonial.<sup>69</sup> The peace talks collapsed, and in January 1986, Museveni's forces overran Kampala. At last, he became president<sup>70</sup>—and sundry rebellions broke out almost immediately.

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<sup>68</sup> Museveni, *Sowing the Mustard Seed*, 172.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 175.

<sup>70</sup> Kasozi, *The Social Origins of Violence*, 174–75.

The LRA was one of these rebel groups, determined to recapture political power from Museveni. Tellingly, Museveni is a son of southwestern Uganda whom the rebel groups from the northern region of Uganda perceived as a threat to their political and military dominance.<sup>71</sup>

At the same time, when Museveni's NRA defeated the forces of Tito Okello, the UNLA retreated to Sudan across a poorly guarded border. The UNLA forces later mobilized with support from the Sudanese government and attacked the northern Ugandan border areas in 1986.<sup>72</sup> Apparently, Sudan's government wanted to help the defeated UNLA soldiers to recapture power in Uganda so that in return, the UNLA would help the Sudanese army to deal with the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), which was fighting for independence of South Sudan at the time.<sup>73</sup> The SPLA was dominant in most parts of South Sudan during this period, but it did not have effective control of the whole territory. The government in Khartoum therefore could use this vacuum to mobilize and arm the UNLA.

Once established in northern Uganda, the UNLA later transformed into the Holy Spirit Movement (HSM) led by Alice Lakwena. Lakwena's forces were defeated in 1987, and she fled to Kenya, where she later died. After Lakwena's defeat, her cousin, Joseph Kony, formed the remnants of her forces into the LRA. Kony styled his forces as a Christian army and declared at the onset that his aim was "to overthrow the government in Kampala and rule Uganda based on Ten Commandments."<sup>74</sup>

Between 1987 and 2006, the LRA kept moving to and from Sudan to carry out attacks in Uganda. This movement of the LRA was possible because of the porous borders that existed between Uganda and Sudan. (During this period, thousands of civilians in northern Uganda were massacred, and more than 10,000 children were abducted by the LRA to serve as soldiers in the ongoing struggle. The Ugandan government tried to engage the group in a series of peace talks, which never

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<sup>71</sup> Souare, "International Criminal Court."

<sup>72</sup> Museveni, *Sowing the Mustard Seed*, 180.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Souare, "International Criminal Court."

materialized.) In 2006, the group relocated to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC); after it was attacked by the UPDF and other regional armies, it scattered to Sudan, South Sudan, and the Central African Republic,<sup>75</sup> where it still operates to date.

## **B. RELIGION AND HIERARCHY IN THE LRA**

Joseph Kony realized from the beginning that if he had to get and keep command and control of his followers, he had to use religion.<sup>76</sup> Born in the early 1960s in a village called Odek, Kony did not complete primary education; instead he spent his formative years serving as an altar boy at his local church.<sup>77</sup> He was raised as a Catholic but later he ventured into practicing traditional medicine, a trade he learned from his brother.<sup>78</sup> When he assumed the LRA leadership, he proclaimed himself a messianic prophet. It is ironic that a group that was planning to use the Ten Commandments as its constitution so flagrantly disregarded the tenet of “thou shalt not kill.” Instead, the LRA preached one thing and practiced rather another.

This tension between the spirit and the practice is not new to the LRA. The Irish Republican Army (IRA) in Northern Ireland used religion for mobilization and as an alibi for its violence. When, at the height of the IRA conflict, Billy Wright, a protestant paramilitarist convicted of charges related to terrorism, was asked by BBC journalist Martin Dillon whether the Irish conflict was a “religious war,” Wright told Dillon that “religion is part of the equation.”<sup>79</sup> By implication, Wright and his colleagues who professed the same faith—Protestants—were ready to die in the conflict as long as what they were fighting for reflected the ideals of their religion.<sup>80</sup> To be sure, the Catholics in

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<sup>75</sup> Fisher, “Framing Kony: Uganda’s War.”

<sup>76</sup> Kristof Titeca, “The Spiritual Order of the LRA,” in *The Lord’s Resistance Army: Myth and Reality*, ed. Tim Allen and Koen Vlassenroot (London: Zed Books, 2010), 62.

<sup>77</sup> Tim Allen and Koen Vlassenroot, *The Lord’s Resistance Army: Myth and Reality* (London: Zed Books, 2010), 9.

<sup>78</sup> Peter Eichstaedt, *First Kill Your Family: Child Soldiers of Uganda and the Lord’s Resistance Army* (Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 2009), 16. Kony seemed to combine traditional spiritualism and Christianity to suite varying situations.

<sup>79</sup> Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God*, 3rd ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 41.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

Northern Ireland also used religion for mobilization and motivation. Father Denis Faul was quoted saying that “the Catholic culture of the Irish gave them the ability to kill and be killed since death ‘is a sacrifice’ and ‘the opportunity of forgiveness’ lessens the guilt involved in killing.”<sup>81</sup>

Likewise, the leader of the LRA Joseph Kony used spiritualism to control his fighters. From the beginning, Kony claimed to have been possessed by a number of spirits. He made his fighters believe that he reached all his decisions through the direction of spirits. He told his fighters that the rules of the LRA were imposed by the spirits and that adherence to these rules would bring victory on the battlefield—while lack of adherence attracted punishment in the form of death on the battlefield.<sup>82</sup> In preparation for battle, Kony would smear his fighters with *Moo ya* (shea nut oil), claiming it would protect them from bullets. This kind of ritual gave Kony’s soldiers courage and motivation to fight, even in the face of government forces that were better equipped and superior in numbers. Allen and Vlassenroot quote one of the LRA commanders, explaining about the anointing rituals before going into battle, thus:

The Holy Spirit reported to the chairman [Kony], who selected the soldiers who could be on “stand-by.” He picked the controllers. He ordered them to mix this kind of herbs, mixed them in powder form, put them in a basin together with water and *Moo ya*. The controllers stand near the basin and splash the soldier, one by one. When the soldiers are near the basin, they put their gun three times in the basin, and women four times. You put the gun up and you say ‘God, you are stronger than anything in the world; therefore the power belongs to you.’ We also sing songs like “Polo Polo” [“Heaven should come to rescue us in our lives, and we shall never leave the way to heaven”], because when we sing, we do not even hear gunshots! When you finish, you cannot believe what you have done. You say: what has happened, how did I do all this? It is as if you are not the one who did it! It is a force which you have in you: it gives you courage and strength! ... All the spirits are with Kony, but if you are going to the battle, you feel that something is with you. In the battlefield, they will be doing their duty and take care of you: everyone will feel very strong.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God*, 42.

<sup>82</sup> Allen and Vlassenroot, *The Lord’s Resistance Army*, 62.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 64.

One of the commanders who surrendered to the government after 17 years with Kony also confirmed that Kony used to tell his soldiers that he was doing what God told him to do. Major Jackson Achama quoted Kony as saying, “When a generation rejects a prophet, any crime committed against them is not a crime.”<sup>84</sup> Such statements were meant to justify raiding, stealing, mutilation, and killing of people from his community in northern Uganda. Achama emphatically told researchers that he had realized that Kony would never give up fighting “until people accept him as a prophet, or he is killed.”<sup>85</sup>

By early 2000, the LRA had grown into a major force divided into four brigades. Each brigade numbered 300 to 800 soldiers organized into three battalions. Battalions had their own commanders and below them, small units each headed by a field commander. Each unit had a provision for a “‘religious officer’ responsible for prayer, fasting, and other spiritual duties.”<sup>86</sup>

During raids, the units would split further into small units for easy mobility and concealment from government soldiers.<sup>87</sup> This tactic was favorable to the group because of the vast bushes in northern Uganda and South Sudan, which the LRA had to traverse to conduct its operations. Most times, the composition of those units included women and children as well, whose role was mainly to carry food and other equipment.

### **C. LRA’S TERROR IN NORTHERN UGANDA**

Although the LRA was organized on military lines, its actual operational repertoire was heavy on terrorism and attacks on noncombatant civilian populations. Just as Mao admonished “Kill just one and frighten ten thousand others,”<sup>88</sup> the LRA used terror in the areas it operated from to garner support. Wickham-Crowley notes in “Terror and Guerrilla Warfare in Latin America” that rebel forces usually employ terror to solicit

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<sup>84</sup> Eichstaedt, *First Kill Your Family*, 100.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 100-101.

<sup>86</sup> Vinci, “The Strategic Use of Fear.”

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> Timothy P. Wickham-Crowley, “Terror and Guerrilla Warfare in Latin America, 1956-1970”. *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 32, no. 2. (Cambridge University Press: 1990), 201-237, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/178913>.



compliance from the peasants.<sup>89</sup> In the same vein, when the LRA realized that it had little support from the population—indeed, some of the local people were joining the Local Defense Units set up by the government—the LRA retaliated by carrying out massacres in the north and northeast of the country with great brutality. In other instances, the LRA cut off “lips, ears, noses, fingers, and hands” of people. In one incident, a 17-year old boy’s ears, lips and fingers were chopped off and placed in an envelope together with a letter reading: “We shall do to you what we have done to him.”<sup>90</sup> It was a message to the local people to cease their support for the government.

The atrocities were always accompanied by abductions. By the time the group fled to DRC in 2006, about 20,000 children had been abducted, according to Human Rights Watch reports.<sup>91</sup> In one such raid in 1996 at Aboke Girls School in Lira, the LRA abducted “139 girls between the ages of twelve and fifteen” in the middle of the night and vanished with them into the bush. The headmistress of the school, Sister Rachele Fassera, followed the rebels into the bush and pleaded for their release. She secured 109, while 30 remained in captivity.<sup>92</sup>

It is believed that the rebels who abducted the Aboke girls insisted on taking some to Kony specifically because he had commanded them to do so. One of Kony’s wives who was rescued in a battle encounter with government forces told researchers that at a certain period, Kony had at least 50 wives and fathered 100 children in the bush. Lily Adong, who was 25 years old with three children, was forced into rebel activities when she was barely 10 years old and spent more than a decade of her youth in captivity.<sup>93</sup>

Such incidents were many in villages, where young boys and girls were abducted. Young girls used to be handed over to soldiers as rewards. During the height of the insurgency, AIDS also posed a big health issue in Uganda. The LRA knew the dangers of AIDS, and given that they could not afford proper functioning health facilities in the

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<sup>89</sup> Wickham-Crowley, “Terror and Guerrilla Warfare.”

<sup>90</sup> Vinci, “The Strategic Use of Fear.”

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Eichstaedt, *First Kill Your Family*, 61.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 24–25.

jungles where they operated, they mitigated the AIDS threat by preferring forced marriages to very young girls, whom, they reasoned, were unlikely to have the disease as they had not yet become sexually active.

Realizing that it was difficult to provide security for each and every homestead against the LRA's abductions and killings, the government designated camps for displaced persons in the north, where civilians lived under the protection of the army. Although this measure minimized abductions and killings, at times, such camps were attacked by the rebels, particularly if they realized that the government forces were thin on the ground. For example in one single attack on a camp called Barlonyo in 2004, around 300 LRA rebels attacked the camp that housed about 5,000 people. They ordered everyone to enter their grass-thatched houses and set the camp on fire. Anyone who tried to escape was shot. By the time the rebels retreated, about 300 civilians were dead in what became known in the history of the insurgency as the Barlonyo Massacre.<sup>94</sup>

#### **D. UGANDA'S ATTEMPT AT PEACE TALKS WITH THE LRA**

There were periods when Uganda's government and the LRA held peace talks, headed by Uganda's minister of state resident in Gulu, Betty Bigombe. (Her role was to bring about reconciliation and reconstruction in northern Uganda.) In one such session in 1993, Kony delegated elders and religious leaders to meet with Bigombe and indicated that the LRA needed six months to consult its scattered forces before they could declare a cease-fire. It is believed that the LRA used this period to replenish its weapons with support from Sudan's government. Either way, the peace talks collapsed amid such bad faith.<sup>95</sup>

Another attempt at peace talks was made in 2006, this time mediated by then-vice president of South Sudan, Dr. Riek Machar. The talks took place in Juba, the capital of what is now South Sudan, which was considered neutral for both parties. Although Kony

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<sup>94</sup> Justice and Reconciliation Project, *Kill Every Living Thing: The Barlonyo Massacre* (Field Note 9), Gulu, Uganda: Justice and Reconciliation Project, n.d. <http://www.scribd.com/doc/12854297/Killing-Every-Living-Thing-Barlonyo-Massacre#scribd>.

<sup>95</sup> Ronald R. Atkinson, "'The Realists in Juba'? An Analysis of the Juba Peace Talks," in *The Lord's Resistance Army: Myth and Reality*, ed. Tim Allen and Koen Vlassenroot (London: Zed Books, 2010), 206.

did not go to Juba for the talks himself, he sent a delegation. At some point during the peace talks, all delegations went to a place called Ri-Kwangba in South Sudan at the border with the DRC, where Kony himself joined the talks. The previous year, the LRA's top five commanders, including Kony, had been indicted by the International Criminal Court (ICC).<sup>96</sup> While some pundits thought that the weight of the ICC charges was forcing the LRA to negotiate, it turned out that the looming indictment cast a long shadow on the Juba peace process. Kony feared that even if he signed the agreement and surrendered, the ICC would still arrest him and take him to The Hague, so he had little incentive to ink any kind of cease-fire with the Ugandan government.

However, Kony also had by that time moved all his forces into Garamba National Park in the DRC, where he set up bases; this relocation was a further disincentive for the LRA to sign the peace deal. Garamba Park encompasses some 4,900 square kilometers, and it is rich in flora and fauna that insurgents could depend on for food and shelter.<sup>97</sup> The remoteness of this park was also an added advantage since it provided the LRA time to recuperate, train, and reorganize itself more or less with impunity. Eventually, Kony refused to sign the accord, and these peace talks collapsed as well.<sup>98</sup>

One aspect that came out of the failed peace talks was that the outside world became better acquainted with the persona of Kony, who granted interviews to the international media and researchers. Prior to these interviews, a number of people doubted whether Kony even existed. Kony used these interviews to state that he was not involved in terrorism, instead describing himself as a "freedom fighter."<sup>99</sup> Considering the atrocities that are synonymous with his organization, his rants were not taken seriously.

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<sup>96</sup> International Criminal Court, "ICC-02/04-01/05: The Prosecutor v. Joseph Kony and Vincent Otti," n.d. [http://www.icc-cpi.int/en\\_menus/icc/situations%20and%20cases/situations/situation%20icc%200204/related%20cases/icc%200204%200105/pages/uganda.aspx](http://www.icc-cpi.int/en_menus/icc/situations%20and%20cases/situations/situation%20icc%200204/related%20cases/icc%200204%200105/pages/uganda.aspx).

<sup>97</sup> African Parks, "Nine Things You Didn't Know about Garamba." *Africa Geographic* (blog). May 6, 2015. <http://africageographic.com/blog/9-things-you-didnt-know-about-garamba/>.

<sup>98</sup> Vinci, *Armed Groups and the Balance of Power*, 94.

<sup>99</sup> Mareike Schomerus, "A Terrorist Is Not A Person Like Me: An Interview with Joseph Kony," in *The Lord's Resistance Army: Myth and Reality*, ed. Tim Allen and Koen Vlassenroot, (London: Zed Books, 2010), 24.

The collapse of the talks allowed the regional armies to launch a war that was intended to uproot the LRA from the jungles of the DRC. It also led to division within rebel ranks. Kony had delegated most of the peace process to his deputy Vincent Otti, but eventually, Kony came to believe Otti was intent on overthrowing him using the peace process. Kony later executed Otti in 2007. In the same year, the LRA's chief of military operations called Opiyo Makasi, and commander Sunday Otto deserted the group with around other 30 fighters.<sup>100</sup> This fallout indicated that Kony had a hardliner inner circle that was not interested in peace talks, while others allied to his deputy Otti were possibly willing to have a negotiated settlement.

The governments of Uganda, South Sudan, and the DRC launched a joint military operation code named "Operation Lightning Thunder" in December 2008. The aim of the operation was to decapitate the LRA command structure so that the rest of the rebel soldiers had an opportunity to surrender and benefit from government mass amnesty.<sup>101</sup> It was also intended to rescue women and children who were LRA captives. However, the operation faced obstacles associated with the terrain—"weather, lack of roads in the area, wide rivers and other logistical difficulties," which made it easy for the rebels to escape back into the ungoverned bush. In the period following the operation, the LRA went on rampage, killing more than 1,000 people in northeastern DRC and South Sudan. As a consequence, more than 180,000 Congolese and 60,000 South Sudanese were forced out of their homes. The LRA split into groups, sending some into the Central African Republic.<sup>102</sup>

#### **E. HOW UNGOVERNED SPACES AIDED THE SURVIVAL OF THE LRA IN CENTRAL AFRICA**

According to The Fund for Peace's Fragile States Index 2015, which monitors sustainability, stability and fragility of states, the four countries where the LRA operates

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<sup>100</sup> The International Institute for Strategic Studies, "Uganda's Elusive Peace Deal," *Strategic Comments* 2008, no. 8 (2008). <https://www.iiss.org/en/publications/strategic%20comments/sections/2008-9832/uganda--39-s-elusive-peace-deal-0832>.

<sup>101</sup> LeSage, "Countering the Lord's Resistance Army."

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

from—the DRC, Sudan, the Central African Republic, and South Sudan—rank among the five least stable countries in the world.<sup>103</sup> All four of these countries have been plagued by armed conflicts in addition to the LRA problem. The DRC has been at war since 1994, when armed Rwandan refugees went there and declared war on Rwanda. The Central African Republic has experienced coups and military rule since the 1960s, while Sudan and South Sudan have also been at war since the 1980s. A combination of these weak states and ungoverned spaces has allowed the LRA to find haven and operate from there.

Whenever the group felt military pressure from the government forces, it retreated to South Sudan, where it had established bases in hard-to-reach areas like Lubanga-tek and the Imatong Mountains.<sup>104</sup> Even when Uganda and Sudan signed an agreement in 2001 allowing Ugandan soldiers to follow the LRA into certain areas in Sudan, the pursuit remained an uphill task. Given the long period the LRA had spent operating in both northern Uganda and South Sudan, they had developed mastery of those areas, to the disadvantage of the Ugandan army, making defeat of the LRA difficult.<sup>105</sup> The complicated terrain with numerous caves offered protection to rebels against modern military equipment including the air force. It was therefore not surprising that when the LRA was attacked in Sudan, it shifted to similar places in the DRC and Central African Republic, two countries with less infrastructure and minimum government presence.

Once the LRA set up bases in the DRC, the Central African Republic, Sudan, and South Sudan, the group continued to abduct civilians to fill its ranks. The LRA also exploited—and poached—natural resources within these countries. In one study on how elephants are facing extinction in the vast forests of Central Africa, it was established that “criminal organizations trafficking in illegally obtained ivory have sprung up in recent years and the money involved has begun to attract terror groups—not just the Janjaweed from Sudan but also ... the Lord’s Resistance Army from the Democratic Republic of

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<sup>103</sup> The Fund for Peace, Fragile States Index 2015, n.d. <http://fsi.fundforpeace.org/>.

<sup>104</sup> LeSage, “Countering the Lord’s Resistance Army.”

<sup>105</sup> Robert L. Feldman, “Why Uganda Has Failed to Defeat the Lord’s Resistance Army,” *Defense and Security Analysis* 24, no. 1 (2008): 45–52, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14751790801903210>.

Congo and the Central African Republic.”<sup>106</sup> Another report by the Enough Project quotes interviews with Garamba National Park rangers, LRA escapees, and senior defectors, indicating that the LRA trades in ivory for arms, ammunition, and food.<sup>107</sup> The park rangers are usually unable to counter LRA poaching of elephants because the rebels are usually better armed.<sup>108</sup>

In fact, for quite some time, the DRC, the Central African Republic, Sudan, and South Sudan have not been able to secure their territories from internal and external armed groups operating in their territories; that role of security is being partly provided by UN troops.<sup>109</sup> The African Union (AU) has always drummed for support both regionally and internationally to ensure that there is some form of governance amidst institutional breakdown. Because of AU and UN efforts, there is the United Nations Stabilization Mission in DRC (MONUSCO), United Nations Mission in Central African Republic (MINUSCA), United Nations Mission in Darfur (UNAMID), and United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMIS) respectively.<sup>110</sup> These UN missions have prevented these countries from further implosion.

## **F. REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL APPROACHES IN COMBATING THE LRA**

The process of combating the LRA has included diplomatic, legal, and military means. In 2000, the Ugandan parliament enacted the Amnesty Act that was intended to woo various rebels who were fighting the government to abandon rebellion without retribution. The LRA was also covered under the Amnesty Act.<sup>111</sup> Although a number of LRA rebels surrendered and were reintegrated into society, the rebels’ capacity to wage

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<sup>106</sup> Peter Canby, “Elephant Watch,” *New Yorker*, May 11, 2015.

<sup>107</sup> Kasper Agger and Jonathan Hutson, *How Elephant Poaching in Congo Helps Support the Lord’s Resistance Army* (Washington, DC: Enough Project, 2013). <http://www.enoughproject.org/files/KonysIvory.pdf>.

<sup>108</sup> “Kony’s Ivory: LRA Poaching in Garamba National Park,” YouTube video, 5:40. Posted by “ENOUGH project,” June 4, 2013. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ivt-d453grI>.

<sup>109</sup> United Nations Peacekeeping, “Current Peacekeeping Operations,” n.d., <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/operations/current.shtml>

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

<sup>111</sup> Souare, “International Criminal Court.”

war was not much diminished, in no small part because ungoverned spaces require regional/international intervention rather than just a national response, particularly when an insurgent group like the LRA crosses borders into Central Africa where it could abduct people and refill its ranks.

Realizing the destabilizing effect the LRA was having in the Central African region and its potential to further spread terror in ungoverned spaces, in 2001, the U.S. State Department added the LRA to its “Terrorist Exclusion List.”<sup>112</sup> Again in 2008, under Executive Order 13324, Joseph Kony was named a “Specially Designated Global Terrorist” by the State Department.<sup>113</sup> These two measures by the United States against the LRA were meant to galvanize regional/international bodies and nongovernmental organizations in the fight against the group.

As previously indicated in Chapter One, the LRA may not pose a direct threat to the United States, but the group’s activities in Central Africa present a concern to the United States as it seeks to see improvement in regional security and peace building. Consequently on November 24, 2010, President Barack Obama spelled out the United States’ counter-LRA strategic plan to Congress with the following strategic objectives: “(a) increase protection of civilians; (b) apprehend or remove from the battlefield Joseph Kony and senior commanders; (c) promote the defection, disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of remaining LRA fighters; and (d) increase humanitarian access and provide continued relief to affected communities.”<sup>114</sup> In order to realize this strategic plan, it also required deployment of U.S. military advisors to the operational areas.

In 2011, the African Union (AU) also “formally designated the LRA as a terrorist group and authorized an initiative to enhance regional cooperation toward the elimination of the LRA.”<sup>115</sup> This initiative involves joint military operations against the LRA by the militaries of Uganda, the DRC, the Central African Republic, Sudan, and South Sudan.

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<sup>112</sup> U.S. State Department, “The Lord’s Resistance Army: Fact Sheet,” Office of the Spokesperson, March 23, 2012, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2012/03/186734.htm>.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid.

<sup>114</sup> LeSage, “Countering the Lord’s Resistance Army.”

<sup>115</sup> U.S. State Department, “The Lord’s Resistance Army.”

Subsequently, in 2012, the United States deployed around 100 troops in the Central African Republic to partner with the African Union Regional Task Force (AU-RTF) in operations to eliminate the LRA.<sup>116</sup> Other international and regional bodies like the UN and International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) recognize the LRA as a terrorist group and have always rendered support towards its elimination. Though all these efforts have not yet put to an end the LRA, the group has been considerably degraded and weakened, and a large number of abducted children have been rescued. Currently, due to sustained military pressure, the group is now a marauding force with an estimated strength of 150–200 fighters.<sup>117</sup> Continuous operations have also made it possible for about 12,000 former LRA combatants and abductees to be rescued and reintegrated into the Ugandan society.<sup>118</sup>

## **G. CONCLUSION**

The LRA insurgency that sprung up in Uganda in 1986 proclaiming a desire to recapture state power has survived up to date largely because of exploiting ungoverned spaces that existed in Uganda in the early 1980s and then in other countries it has been operating—South Sudan, Sudan, DRC, and Central African Republic. By 2006, the UPDF had developed capacity to eliminate the LRA insurgency on Ugandan territory, whereupon the group fled to the Central African region, thus changing the dynamics of the insurgency. Due to limited state authority and lack of effective territorial control by respective governments, the group found it easy to operate in those environments.

Because of these dynamics, regional players—AU-RTF—and strategic partners like the United States decided to combine efforts to bring the LRA insurgency to an end. Already, some positive results of these efforts have been realized through rescue of many abducted children and the surrender of some senior LRA commanders, including Dominic Ongwen, who is already in the hands of the ICC at The Hague. The

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<sup>116</sup> Raghavan and Whitlock, “Hunt for Joseph Kony.”

<sup>117</sup> U.S. State Department, “The Lord’s Resistance Army.”

<sup>118</sup> U.S. State Department, “U.S. Support to Regional Efforts to Counter the Lord’s Resistance Army: Fact Sheet,” Office of the Spokesperson, March 23, 2012, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2012/03/186732.htm>.



maintenance of the operations tempo by this partnership against the LRA presents an opportunity to bring to it to an end.

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### **III. ANALYSIS OF AL-SHABAAB, AQIM, AND BOKO HARAM IN RELATION TO UNGOVERNED SPACES**

Like the LRA of Uganda, which exploited the ungoverned spaces that existed in and outside Uganda, Al-Shabaab, AQIM, and Boko Haram are Islamist terrorist organizations in Africa that also have used ungoverned spaces to mete out terror in their areas of operation. This chapter attempts to analyze how.

As Humud et al. have observed, “Africa’s porous borders,” as well as “weak law enforcement and judicial institutions,” and the long-term “absence of central authority in states like Somalia, have provided an enabling environment for violent extremist groups.”<sup>119</sup> The analysis of Al-Shabaab, AQIM, and Boko Haram is important because an understanding of these three groups helps policy makers and counterterrorism experts to discern differences and similarities in how these terrorist organizations operating across Africa, from East Africa, through Central, and then to West Africa, manage to sustain themselves and spread—as well as how they can be combated.

#### **A. AL-SHABAAB**

Al-Shabaab is an Islamic “insurgent group and a transnational terrorist affiliate of Al Qaeda” that became a dominant force in Somalia after Ethiopian intervention drove out the Union of Islamic Courts (UIC) in 2006.<sup>120</sup> Formerly perceived as a youth military wing of the UIC, Al-Shabaab has evolved over time, amid the absence of central authority in Somalia, into a jihadist organization that has not only terrorized Somalia but also carried out terrorist bombings in Uganda and Kenya and continues to threaten both regional and international security.

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<sup>119</sup> Carla E. Humud, et al, *Al Qaeda–Affiliated Groups: Middle East and Africa*, CRS Report No. R43756 (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2014), <http://fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/R43756.pdf>.

<sup>120</sup> Peter J. Pam, *State Collapse, Insurgency, and Counterinsurgency: Lessons from Somalia* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute and U.S. Army War College Press, 2013), 22–23.

## 1. Background

Starting in 1991, when President Muhammad Siyad Barre's government was toppled at the height of factional, clan-based fighting, Somalia degenerated from a collapsed state to a failed one, which it remains to date.<sup>121</sup> A vicious war followed the overthrow of Barre, as clans and sub-clans vied for control of Mogadishu, the capital and center of power. Each group tried in its turn to carve out an area of the city as its stronghold. Outside Mogadishu, especially in the north of the country, other warlords also battled for dominance and power—and territory in which to wield both.<sup>122</sup> The social and humanitarian impact of the war came close to a catastrophe as civilian deaths from famine swelled because the warlords confiscated relief food to feed their own fighters and supporters and to barter for weapons.<sup>123</sup>

As years went by without any winner, Somalia fragmented. In 1991, the Somali National Movement (SNM) declared part of the northern region that borders Djibouti independent, dubbing it Somaliland.<sup>124</sup> In 1998, the Somali Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF) took control of the northeast region of Somalia, declared it autonomous, and named it Puntland.<sup>125</sup> Though this division brought some relative calmness in these two regions, it never translated into peace, and Somalia remained in turmoil.

The absence of a central government in Somalia no doubt created favorable conditions for various armed militias to flourish in the country. One such militia was Al-Itihad Al-Islami (AIAI), which operated near the border with Ethiopia with an aim of annexing the Ogaden region of Ethiopia to Somalia. Between 1996 and 1997, AIAI

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<sup>121</sup> Pam, *State Collapse, Insurgency, and Counterinsurgency*, 1. Note that in January 2013, the U.S. government recognized the Federal Government of Somalia for the first time since 1991. This was after AMISOM drove out Islamist insurgents—Al-Shabaab—from most of Somalia's towns including the capital Mogadishu.

<sup>122</sup> Richard H. Shultz and Andrew J. Dew, *Insurgents, Terrorists and Militias: The Warriors of Contemporary Combat* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006). In this book, the authors contend that while clan politics was at play during the conflict, fighting also served the powerful self-interests of individual warlords.

<sup>123</sup> Shultz and Dew, *Insurgents, Terrorists and Militias*, 76.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, 74.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, 75.

carried out bomb attacks and kidnappings of aid workers in Ethiopia.<sup>126</sup> The organization also was reported at the time to be receiving funding from Osama bin Laden, fundamentalists in the Arabian Peninsula, and members of the Somali Diaspora. It also obtained training for its personnel from Al Qaeda in Afghanistan and stocks of weapons from Sudan and Eritrea<sup>127</sup>—two countries that are known for their support for Islamic extremism. For example, the UN has imposed targeted sanctions on Eritrea for “providing political, financial, training and logistical support to armed opposition groups including Al-Shabaab” that are “engaged in undermining” stability in Somalia and the region.<sup>128</sup>

In its operations, AIAI established schools and orphanages, which it used to indoctrinate youth with extremist ideologies. Later in 2004, some members of AIAI formed the Union of Islamic Courts in Somalia, comprising several different Sharia courts with different ideologies. While the UIC tried to assert its authority in Mogadishu, it at the same time allowed terrorist training camps to operate in Somalia, fraternized with Al Qaeda, and declared jihad against Ethiopia.<sup>129</sup>

In the same period, the international community was trying to set up a semblance of government in Somalia, and the so-called Transitional Federal Government (TFG) was established with its headquarters at Baidoa City near the Ethiopian border. The TFG was a result of lengthy negotiations that began in Djibouti in 2000 among Somalis with different political affiliations. The TFG initiative had support both regionally and internationally because it was seen as a chance to reinstate government authority in Somalia and to curtail the growth of extremist groups.<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> Christopher Daniels, “Somalia in the Horn of Africa Security Equation since September 2001,” in *Africa in the New World Order: Peace and Security Challenges in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Olayiwola Abegunrin (New York: Lexington Books, 2014), 200.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

<sup>128</sup> United Nations Security Council, Resolution 2023, “On Eritrea,” 2011, <http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/Somalia%20S%20RES%202023.pdf>.

<sup>129</sup> Daniels, “Somalia in the Horn of Africa,” 202.

<sup>130</sup> Nathan Mugisha, “The Way Forward in Somalia,” *The RUSI Journal* 156, no. 3 (2011): 26–33, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03071847.2011.591080>.

Because the UIC wanted to assert itself, in 2006 it carried out attacks against the TFG in Baidoa, prompting Ethiopia to invade Somalia with the intention of overthrowing the UIC. As the top leadership of the UIC faced defeat and fled to Eritrea, a group calling itself Al-Shabaab—which means “youth” in Arabic—sprung up. Al-Shabaab had been a military-youth wing of the UIC.<sup>131</sup>

Al-Shabaab was able to mobilize followers quickly using propaganda, first by appealing to anti-Ethiopian sentiments, depicting Ethiopia as an occupying force of Somalia, and second, by claiming that Ethiopia was just a puppet of the United States, bent on fighting Islamist regimes in Afghanistan, Iraq, and now Somalia.<sup>132</sup>

Amid the prolonged fighting, subsequent fragmentation, and total collapse of the country, various armed groups had to mushroom. For example between 2003 and 2005, the World Bank estimated that there were 70,000–80,000 active militia members in Somalia.<sup>133</sup> Al-Shabaab capitalized on this situation, and its ranks swelled apace, thanks as well to the additional influence and training and equipment from Al Qaeda from the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) in Yemen and other like-minded sponsors.<sup>134</sup> Indeed, while in some instances Al-Shabaab impressed fighters by force, it also offered food and a monthly allowance of \$100 to \$300. The group also promised its soldiers that if they died in the line of duty, Al-Shabaab would support their families.<sup>135</sup> This kind of mobilization helped Al-Shabaab to build a potent force.

## **2. Al-Shabaab Organization and Leadership**

The first recognized leader of Al-Shabaab was Aden Hash Ayro who died in a U.S. missile strike in 2008. He was succeeded by Ahmed Abdi Godane, who was also killed by a U.S. airstrike in August 2014. During Godane’s rule, Al-Shabaab was riven

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<sup>131</sup> Daniels, “Somalia in the Horn of Africa,” 203.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

<sup>133</sup> Anna Maedl, Roos Haer and Michael Odenwald, “Using Micro-Level Data to Map State Failure: The Example of Somalia,” *Civil Wars* 13, no.1 (2011): 61–79, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13698249.2011.555692>.

<sup>134</sup> Pam, *State Collapse, Insurgency, and Counterinsurgency*, 24.

<sup>135</sup> Lauren Ploch, *Countering Terrorism in East Africa: the US Response*, CRS Report No. R41473 (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service Report, 2010), <http://fas.org/sgp/crs/terror/R41473.pdf>.

with internal rivalry among the top leadership, but after his death, Godane's confidant, Ahmed Umar, assumed the primary role since he was considered to be a unifier. Immediately after take over, Umar reaffirmed Al-Shabaab's allegiance to Al Qaeda leader Zawahiri. The group maintains an extremist strand of Islam and claims to be fighting with a "vision of uniting ethnic Somali-inhabited areas of Kenya, Ethiopia, Djibouti, and Somalia under an Islamist caliphate." Al-Shabaab leaders have also on several occasions pronounced that they are "committed to the global jihad movement."<sup>136</sup>

Al-Shabaab is organized into four main structures; "the *Shura* Council (consultative body), the *Qiyadah* (the top leadership), the *Mujahirin* (the foreign fighters and Somalis with foreign passports), and the *Ansar* (the local Somali fighters.)" The Shura Council comprises about 10 men and forms the highest decision-making body. This body is known to be secretive, but it is believed that more than 70 percent of its members are foreigners. The Qiyadah is composed of field commanders spread across the country in their respective areas of command, while the Mujahirin are always camped and trained separately to prevent overexposure to the society outside and possible defection. Most of the Mujahirin have been in insurgent hotspots like Afghanistan, Kashmir, and Chechnya, and Al-Shabaab taps into their experience. The Ansar is the lowest organ that includes foot soldiers, conscripts, and recruits.<sup>137</sup> Al-Shabaab also has an intelligence wing called the *Amniyat* that is responsible for carrying out suicide and assassination missions at home and abroad.<sup>138</sup> At the height of the Al-Shabaab insurgency, AMISOM sources indicated that there were about 1,500 foreign fighters in Al-Shabaab ranks, while the total strength of the group ranged between 8,000 and 12,000 fighters.<sup>139</sup>

It is these numbers that Al-Shabaab has used to spread extremist intimidation to instill fear in the population. It also created sections of the force as religious police that

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<sup>136</sup> Humud et al, *Al Qaeda-Affiliated Groups*.

<sup>137</sup> Mugisha, "The Way Forward in Somalia."

<sup>138</sup> U.S. State Department, "Terrorist Designations of Ahmed Diriye and Mahad Karate," Office of the Spokesperson, April 21, 2015. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2015/04/240932.htm>.

<sup>139</sup> Mugisha, "The Way Forward in Somalia."

dispensed harsh punishments like “floggings, amputations, stoning, and beheadings, for violations of its strict interpretation of Islamic law.”<sup>140</sup> In addition, it carried out “kidnappings, shootings, and targeted assassinations of TFG officials, journalists, civil society activists and aid workers.”<sup>141</sup> Al-Shabaab also used “improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and suicide bombers” to attack AMISOM and government buildings and institutions, and the UN. For example, in 2008, it attacked United Nations Development Program offices in Somaliland and Puntland.<sup>142</sup>

### **3. Al-Shabaab Terror in Somalia and East Africa**

The terror that Al-Shabaab has meted out in Somalia and East Africa stems from earlier terror acts of Al Qaeda in 1990s, when the group trained militants in Somalia and infiltrated cells in Kenya and Tanzania. In 1993, when 18 U.S. soldiers were killed in Mogadishu during Operation Restore Hope, Al Qaeda acknowledged that it had trained those militia members.<sup>143</sup> As noted, three of the terrorists who masterminded the 1998 U.S. embassy bombings in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam were trained in Somalia, though some of them were foreign nationals from Tanzania and Comoros.<sup>144</sup> In these simultaneous attacks, 224 people were killed, and 5,000 were injured.<sup>145</sup> After the bombing, it was established by law enforcement that Fazul Abdullah Mohammed, Wadhi el Hage, and Ahmed Ghailani had trained and received funding to carry out the bombings from Al Qaeda in Afghanistan.<sup>146</sup> When Al-Shabaab established itself in Somalia, it built on this linkage.

At the height of its operations when it controlled Mogadishu and other large parts of Somalia before the AMISOM offensive, among its thousands of fighters, Al-Shabaab

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<sup>140</sup> Ploch, *Countering Terrorism in East Africa*, 8.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid.

<sup>142</sup> Ploch, *Countering Terrorism in East Africa*.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid.

<sup>144</sup> Mugisha, “The Way Forward in Somalia.”

<sup>145</sup> Daniel Agbibo, “Shifting the Background: The Transformation of Al-Shabaab and the Growing Influence of Al-Qaeda in East Africa and the Horn,” *Politikon: South African Journal of Political Studies* 42, no. 2 (2015), <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02589346.2015.1005791>.

<sup>146</sup> Ploch, *Countering Terrorism in East Africa*.



boasted of hundreds of foreign fighters from Kenya, Tanzania, Sudan, Bangladesh, Chechnya, and Pakistan, as well as Europe, Australia, Canada, and the United States.<sup>147</sup> These foreign fighters found it possible to flock to Somalia because the country was fractured and could be used as a springboard for nurturing and spreading Islamic extremism.

In addition to benefiting from foreign fighters in building its terror machinery, Al-Shabaab received equipment and training from countries like Iran, Syria, Libya, and Eritrea. Somali communities in the Diaspora also provided support to Al-Shabaab in the form of logistics and finances. Such wider support came from Eastleigh in Nairobi and Dubai.<sup>148</sup> Of course it should be noted that Al-Shabaab also earned significant revenue from controlling ports, road tolls, and taxes on businesses in Somalia.<sup>149</sup>

Al-Shabaab attacks have not been limited to Somalia. In 2010, the group carried out attacks on crowds of people watching a live screening of the FIFA World Cup finals in Kampala, killing more than 74 people and leaving about 70 others injured. While claiming responsibility, Al-Shabaab said the attack was in retaliation for Uganda's role in AMISOM.<sup>150</sup> Two years later in 2013, Al-Shabaab again attacked Kenya's Westgate Mall in Nairobi, killing at least 70 people and injuring 175. In one interview to the media, Al-Shabaab indicated that it had chosen the Westgate mall because it was frequented by "Kenyan elites, diplomats, and tourists, specifically Americans and Israelis."<sup>151</sup> Indeed, though no Americans or Israelis were known to have died in the attack, "at least 18 foreigners were killed, including citizens of Britain, France, Canada, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Australia, Peru, India, Ghana, South Africa, and China."<sup>152</sup> Al-Shabaab claimed that Kenya was also targeted because of having troops in AMISOM. Besides

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<sup>147</sup> Ibid.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid.

<sup>150</sup> Agbiboa, "Shifting the Background."

<sup>151</sup> Ibid., 178.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid., 178.

Westgate, Kenya has withstood other attacks on its soil including at bus parks and other social gathering places like bars.

Still Somalia is key to the group's success—amid the lacking governance and governability of the state. After all, for more than 20 years, Somalia has had no government and therefore non-state actors have been able to move in and out of the country without detection, interception, or neutralization.<sup>153</sup>

The Al-Shabaab attacks on Kenya and Uganda also demonstrate how an ungoverned space—in this case, Somalia—can be used to attract foreigners, train them outside the reach of any authority, and then send them to whichever target the terrorist group desires to strike. For example, in the wake of the Kampala bombings, a number of suspects were charged in courts of law, “including 14 Ugandans, 10 Kenyans, six Somalis, one Rwandan, and one Pakistani.”<sup>154</sup> One Ugandan among those suspects told journalists that “he was motivated by a rage against Americans, including U.S. support to the Transitional Federal Government in Somalia.”<sup>155</sup>

Likewise, in the aftermath of the Garissa University attack by Al-Shabaab in Kenya in April 2015, where more than 147 people were killed, authorities were able to identify Abdirahim Abdullahi as a Kenyan citizen. Apparently, his father is a chief of Mandera County in northeast Kenya. A law student at the University of Nairobi, Abdullahi joined Al-Shabaab after graduating in 2013.<sup>156</sup> This trend of non-Somali East African nationals participating in the Al-Shabaab attacks indicates how terror groups like Al-Shabaab are using ungoverned spaces—the porous borders, nonexistent immigration control, and lack of central authority—in Somalia to recruit and network in East Africa,

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<sup>153</sup> Stephen F. Burgess, “Comparative Challenges in Securing the Horn of Africa and Sahara,” *Comparative Strategy* 34, no. 2 (2015): 202–217, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01495933.2015.1017381>.

<sup>154</sup> Ploch, *Countering Terrorism in East Africa*, 12.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>156</sup> Loulla-Mae Eleftheriou-Smith, “Kenya Garissa University Attack Al Shabaab Gun Man Abdirahim Abdullahi Identified as Son of Kenyan Government Official,” *Independent*, September 23, 2015, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/africa/kenya-garissa-university-attack-alshabab-gunman--abdirahim-abdullahi-identified-as-son-of-kenyan-government-official-10156726.html>.

thus posing policy implications for both counterterrorism experts and the international community, including the United States, in combating terrorism in the region.

#### **4. Intervention by the International Community in Somalia**

Aware that failed states and ungoverned spaces could breed general insecurity and terrorism, the international community attempted early to fix the security situation in Somalia, but these attempts were unsuccessful. In 1992, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) decided to take action in Somalia by passing Resolution 751, which called for the UN to facilitate humanitarian assistance. The UN Operation in Somalia I (UNOSOM I) was mainly a small military force that was supposed to negotiate and reconcile the warlords, monitor a cease-fire, and coordinate and support relief agencies to address the problem of famine that had been aggravated by war.<sup>157</sup> To make UNOSOM I more effective, a United Task Force (UNITAF) was created largely with U.S. support and funding—to the tune of 75 percent of its budget. UNITAF was created under Chapter VII of the UN Charter with the mandate for peace enforcement and “authority to compel compliance by forcefully separating and suppressing the belligerents.”<sup>158</sup>

However, UNITAF’s mission was limited to only five months so as to hand over to a multinational, UN-led organization, named UN Operation in Somalia II (UNOSOM II). Under UNSC Resolution 814, UNOSOM II’s mandate was to continue the humanitarian relief effort in Somalia and restore the country’s political, law enforcement, and social institutions as well as its economy.<sup>159</sup> Amid a projected international force of 20,000, the United States contributed 4,200 troops that included a 1,200-man Quick Reaction Force. Among other countries that contributed troops were Pakistani and Malaysia.

UNOSOM II met with stiff resistance from Somali warlords who wanted to remain in full control of their strongholds. This situation led to open armed confrontations between UNOSOM II forces and several militia groups, culminating in

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<sup>157</sup> Shultz and Dew, *Insurgents, Terrorists and Militias*, 76.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*, 79.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*, 80.

fatal incidents on a number of occasions. In one such incident, Somali militiamen using a rocket-propelled grenade shot down a U.S. helicopter in Mogadishu in what would later be recorded as the Black Hawk Down incident.<sup>160</sup> Armed confrontation continued to intensify within the first year of the UNOSOM II mission, thus undermining its success. For example, in one of the operations to capture one of the warlords—Mohamed Farah Aidid—in October 1993, 19 Americans were killed and 84 injured. In the same incident, scores of Pakistani and Malaysian soldiers were among the casualties while a number of Somali nationals also registered high fatalities. In March 1994, the United States pulled its troops from Somalia, and one year later, the UN brought UNOSOM II to an official end.<sup>161</sup> This departure of the international community from Somalia ushered in another decade of further disintegration of the country as warlords sought supremacy and dominance over each other and the remnant population.

Nevertheless, a bigger section of the Somali people, the international community, and other stakeholders in regional security like the United States did not lose hope of restoring Somalia as a viable state, well aware that continuous neglect would be counterproductive, particularly as the Islamists, including Al-Shabaab, were trying to hijack the country. In 2007, the year following Ethiopia's unilateral intervention in Somalia to drive out the UIC, the UNSC adopted Resolution 1744, authorizing the African Union to deploy a mission in Somalia with a six-month mandate. This mandate authorized AMISOM to undertake the following tasks:

- (a) Take all necessary measures, as appropriate, and in coordination with the Somalia National Defence and Public Safety Institutions, to reduce the threat posed by Al Shabaab and other armed opposition groups;
- (b) assist in consolidating and expanding the control of the FGS over its national territory;
- (c) assist the FGS in establishing conditions for effective and legitimate governance across Somalia, through support, as appropriate, in the areas of security, including the protection of Somali institutions and key infrastructure, governance, rule of law and delivery of basic services;
- (d) provide, within its capabilities and as appropriate, technical and other support for the enhancement of the capacity of the Somalia state institutions, particularly the National Defence, public safety, and public

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<sup>160</sup> Ibid., 85.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid., 86.

service institutions; (e) support the FGS in establishing the required institutions and conducive conditions for the conduct of free, fair and transparent elections by 2016, in accordance with the Provisional Constitution; (f) liaise with humanitarian actors and facilitate, as may be required and within its capabilities, humanitarian assistance in Somalia, as well as the resettlement of internally displaced persons and the return of refugees; (g) facilitate coordinated support by relevant AU institutions and structures towards the stabilization and reconstruction of Somalia; and (h) provide protection to AU and UN personnel, installations and equipment, including the right of self-defence.<sup>162</sup>

Subsequently, the first AMISOM troops were deployed to Mogadishu on March 6, 2007, comprising Ugandan and Burundian forces.<sup>163</sup> The AMISOM force that was supposed to have strength of 12,000 has since been boosted by troops from Kenya, Ethiopia, and Djibouti.<sup>164</sup> With more boots on the ground, AMISOM has been able to push Al-Shabaab from Mogadishu and other major towns in Somalia, thus enabling the FGS to carry out some minimum political steps including the establishment of a parliament and the executive, though many government institutions remain weak.

In fact, the establishment of some of the government institutions has encouraged some Somalis in the Diaspora to return home. For example, a policy brief by the Peace Research Institute Oslo indicated this year that a number of Somalis in the Diaspora, especially from the U.S. and Norway, were returning home to contribute to politics, business, and civil society.<sup>165</sup> The numbers are not big, the report says, but expectations are high.

Although Al-Shabaab has been weakened to some extent in recent years, the group still has capacity to carry out asymmetric attacks both within and outside Somalia, a situation that may require AMISOM to stay a bit longer so as to fully degrade the Al-

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<sup>162</sup> “AMISOM Mandate,” African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), n.d., <http://amisom-au.org/amisom-mandate/>.

<sup>163</sup> Mugisha, “The Way Forward in Somalia.”

<sup>164</sup> “AMISOM Military Component,” African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), n.d., <http://amisom-au.org/mission-profile/military-component/>.

<sup>165</sup> Cindy Horst, *Back in Business? Diaspora Return to Somalia*, Peace Research Institute Oslo Policy Brief (Oslo: Peace Research Institute Oslo, 2015), [http://file.prio.no/Publication\\_files/prio/Horst%20-%20Back%20in%20Business,%20PRIO%20Policy%20Brief%205-2015.pdf](http://file.prio.no/Publication_files/prio/Horst%20-%20Back%20in%20Business,%20PRIO%20Policy%20Brief%205-2015.pdf).

Shabaab threat. More and better government and governance in Somalia, conversely, likely will further degrade Al-Shabaab.

## **B. AQIM**

AQIM is a terrorist organization that was founded in Algeria in early 2000 after evolving out of another Islamist outfit called the Group for Salafist Preaching and Combat (GSPC). AQIM's initial goal was to install an Islamic state in Algeria, but it has since embraced internationalist goals including attacking foreigners, making common cause with other Al Qaeda-affiliated extremist groups in both West and North Africa to exert more regional influence, and propagating the Islamic extremist agenda.<sup>166</sup>

### **1. Background**

AQIM came to prominence in Algeria in January 2007 after Abdelmalek Droukdel, one of the top leaders of another Islamic extremist organization called Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat, declared that he was changing the name of the organization to AQIM as a way of linking with the Al Qaeda global network. The GSPC itself had evolved from the Armed Islamic Group (GIA), which had been founded by Algerians who participated in the Pakistani/Afghanistan armed jihad against the Soviet Union.<sup>167</sup> When members of the GIA returned from Pakistan and Afghanistan to Algeria, they opposed the Algerian Army, which had seized power after elections in 1991. In those elections, the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) had won and was preparing to form a government. Like the GIA, the armed wing of FIS—the Islamic Salvation Army (AIS) also opposed the military takeover. In turn, the army did not want Islamists to take control of Algeria since FIS was considered an extremist party.<sup>168</sup> In response, the Islamists waged armed resistance, but they were overpowered.

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<sup>166</sup> Richard A. Nessel, "Why Failing Terrorist Groups Persist: The Case of Al-Qaeda in the Maghreb," (master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, California, 2012).

<sup>167</sup> Ricardo René Larémont, "Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb: Terrorism and Counterterrorism in the Sahel," *African Security* 4, no. 4 (2011): 242–68, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/19392206.2011.628630>.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid.

In 1997, the AIS agreed to lay down its arms in return for amnesty from the Algerian government—while the GIA continued with the resistance. This military/political contest gave birth to AQIM when Abdelmalek Droukdel decided to widen the war by engaging what he called the “far enemy” of Islam—United States and European states. To emphasize his links with Al Qaeda, Droukdel announced the formation of AQIM on September 11, 2006 (the fifth anniversary of the 9/11 attacks), and finally announced the merger with Al Qaeda in January 2007.<sup>169</sup>

## **2. Organization and Leadership of AQIM**

AQIM has been using the Sahel region of West Africa to spread terror. While AQIM leader Droukdel is said to reside in the region of the Kabylie Mountains east of the capital Algiers, he has two deputies, Mokhtar Belmokhtar and Djamel Okacha, whom he has assigned to take control of the Sahel region.<sup>170</sup> This region refers to “a wide stretch of sparsely populated terrain that runs across Mali, Niger, and Chad.”<sup>171</sup> The Maghreb consists of countries that make the north tip of Africa—Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Mauritania, and Libya.<sup>172</sup> These countries have been characteristically unstable and therefore have limited state capacity to monitor and secure these expansive desert regions and the border line of the Mediterranean Sea. AQIM has exploited this environment to carry out kidnappings for ransom, cocaine, and human trafficking.<sup>173</sup>

AQIM has such strategic objectives including “(1) the overthrow of the government of Algeria; (2) the creation of a safe haven among the Tuareg tribes of Mali, Niger, and Mauritania wherein it can obtain refuge and where it can also encourage Tuareg rebellion against central states; and (3) the targeting of France, Great Britain,

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<sup>169</sup> Ibid.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid. Note that the two commanders also have subordinates whom they choose especially from the regions where they are born so as to take control of those areas and beyond. Note also that Djamel Okacha succeeded Abdelhamid Abu Zeid who was killed in northern Mali in 2013 during fighting with the French army.

<sup>171</sup> Humud, et al., *Al Qaeda–Affiliated Groups*, 19.

<sup>172</sup> Maghreb Review, “The Word *Maghreb*,” n.d., <http://www.maghreb-studies-association.co.uk/en/allhome.html>.

<sup>173</sup> Larémont, “Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb.”

Germany, Belgium, and Spain through planned bombings by its affiliated members in Europe.”<sup>174</sup> For example, in June 2013, French police arrested a 29-year old Algerian only known as Ali (alias Abu Jaji) in Vaucluse, in southern France, after getting information that he was planning to bomb the Eiffel Tower, Louvre Museum, and a nuclear power plant.<sup>175</sup> Apparently, the suspect was in contact with other AQIM members and had been advised to first travel to Algeria to “benefit from a military training and training in combat techniques,”<sup>176</sup> before he could carry out the plot. Ali’s arrest came just a month before he could fly to Tunisia via Algeria for the training.<sup>177</sup> The U.S. government has also been concerned that AQIM was expanding its influence in northern Mali through training the local militias there and expanding recruitment with the aim of advancing transnational terrorist plots. To this end, it is believed that AQIM has connections to other extremist groups in Libya, Nigeria, Somalia, and Yemen, among others.<sup>178</sup>

In a period of eight years from 2003 up to 2011, for example, AQIM kidnapped 63 Westerners, and some 150 million euros were said to have been paid to AQIM by European governments in ransom in the same period. Trafficking in cocaine has also allowed AQIM to acquire small arms and light weapons especially from narcotics dealers from South America. These arms pass through West Africa in the Gulf of Guinea. The group is also said to deal in smuggling of undocumented migrants from sub-Saharan Africa, especially from Cameroon, the DRC, Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Nigeria, among others, and selling them to Libya and Algeria. These two countries then end up shipping these migrants to Europe at a profit—whether or not the hapless migrants survive the

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<sup>174</sup> Ibid., 245.

<sup>175</sup> Henry Samuel, “Islamist Plot to Blow up Eiffel Tower, Louvre and Nuclear Power Plant Foiled, Say French police,” *Telegraph*, July 9, 2014. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/france/10956636/Islamist-plot-to-blow-up-Eiffel-Tower-Louvre-and-nuclear-power-plant-foiled-say-French-police.html>.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid.

<sup>178</sup> Alexis Arieff, *Crisis in Mali*, CRS Report No. R42664 (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2013), <http://fas.org/srg/crs/row/R42664.pdf>.



difficult journey across the Mediterranean, often in overcrowded, derelict vessels.<sup>179</sup> These activities are reported to be part of the sources of funds to run the organization. This funding is said to be supplemented by aid from supporters in Europe.<sup>180</sup>

AQIM actions indicate that though its original goal of establishing an Islamic state in Algeria remains, the group has been exhibiting internationalist ambitions through attacking foreigners, supporting other Al Qaeda jihadists and expanding regional control and influence as a way of realizing its caliphate dreams. For example, AQIM has been pursuing ties with other violent extremist groups operating in Libya, Tunisia, Mali, and Nigeria in such areas as coordinating operations and sharing training and personnel.<sup>181</sup>

While AQIM continues to operate in the northern part of Algeria that is less populated and mountainous, it has deliberately shifted most of its operations to the Sahelian states where it is able to carry out its activities without hindrance because there is less government in these arid, often sparsely populated areas.<sup>182</sup> Crucial to this AQIM connection and destabilizing effect are the Tuareg communities, which claim greater control over what they perceive as their historical homeland in the north that they prefer to call “Azawad.” The Tuareg have always complained of discrimination and neglect by the Malian government. Although there have been attempts to hold negotiations and to integrate armed Tuareg into the Malian army, the government has always reneged, thus leading to a buildup of armed conflict that is currently ongoing in Mali.<sup>183</sup>

Indeed, in January 2012, a Tuareg rebel group called the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA), together with sections of Islamic extremist groups including Ansar al Dine, AQIM, and the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJWA), ganged up with “deserters from the Malian armed forces” and launched

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<sup>179</sup> Larémont, “Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb.”

<sup>180</sup> Humud, et al., *Al Qaeda–Affiliated Groups*.

<sup>181</sup> Larémont, “Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb.”

<sup>182</sup> Burgess, “Comparative Challenges in Securing the Horn.”

<sup>183</sup> Arieff, *Crisis in Mali*.

coordinated attacks targeting government forces and installations in Northern Mali.<sup>184</sup> When the government forces faced armed defeat from the rebels, some units mutinied, leading to a coup in March of that year.<sup>185</sup> The government collapsed easily because it had experienced institutional weaknesses and fragility, especially in the northern part of the country, which had been neglected for a long time.

In the 2015 annual ranking of fragile states by the Fund for Peace, all the countries of Maghreb and Sahel regions where AQIM operates are rated to have been experiencing levels of fragility ranging from worsening to critical worsening for the last decade (2006–2015).<sup>186</sup> Such continuous fragility certainly plays into the hands of AQIM.

### **3. AQIM'S Terror in the Maghreb**

Algeria has suffered most of the terror attacks by AQIM, but neighboring states like Mauritania and Mali have also had a series of attacks. Such attacks have always targeted foreigners, military installations, and international organizations, among others. In June 2005, the group attacked Lemgheiti barracks in Mauritania in the northeast of the country and killed 15 Mauritanian soldiers. In December 2007, AQIM killed four French tourists in Mauritania, and this incident led to the cancellation of the famous Paris-to-Dakar motor rally, an international motor-sport tradition for almost 40 years since 1977.<sup>187</sup> In the same month, the group carried out double suicide bombings in Algiers, targeting the offices of the United Nations and the Constitutional Court; 41 people died, and 170 were injured. AQIM also attacked the Malian army in 2009 at a place called al-Wasra in northern Mali, killing 28 Malian soldiers.<sup>188</sup>

AQIM's intentions to target foreigners in particular and the West in general have been increasing overtime. For example, in 2009, the group acknowledged that it was

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<sup>184</sup> United Nations, "MINUSMA: United Nations Stabilization Mission in Mali," n.d., <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/minusma/background.shtml>.

<sup>185</sup> Ibid.

<sup>186</sup> Fund for Peace, Fragile States Index 2015.

<sup>187</sup> Dakar, "History," n.d., <http://www.dakar.com/dakar/2015/us/history.html>.

<sup>188</sup> Larémont, "Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb."

behind the killing of Christopher Legget from the United States who was stationed in Mauritania as a missionary.<sup>189</sup> Further still, according to the U.S. government, AQIM was linked to the September 11, 2012, Benghazi attacks and the group “has always publicly urged its supporters to attack U.S. embassies and kill U.S. ambassadors.”<sup>190</sup>

The Arab Spring that started in Tunisia in 2011 and swept through Egypt and Libya was initially perceived to have been driven by democratic forces, but in the aftermath, events seem to have worked to destabilize the Maghreb region. Islamic extremists, including AQIM, took advantage of the crumbling regimes in these countries to acquire arms and recruits amid the chaos. For example, when Benghazi fell into the hands of anti-Gadaffi protestors, some members of AQIM and the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG) are reported to have raided ammunition depots and pillaged arms which included surface-to-air missiles, antitank missiles, and an assortment of ammunition among others.<sup>191</sup> Some of those weapons are said to have been transported to northeastern Niger and western Chad, where AQIM is known to operate.<sup>192</sup>

In the same vein, after the fall of regimes that had dominated the political scene in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya, the extremists took advantage of the situation to position themselves to fill the power vacuum that had been created. Although recent terrorist attacks in Tunisia are not yet confirmed as the work of AQIM, violent Islamic extremism is on the rise. For example, in March 2015, two armed men attacked the Bardo National Museum, a leading tourist attraction in Tunis, killing 20 people and wounding 44 others.<sup>193</sup> Most of the victims were from Japan, Italy, Colombia, Spain, Austria, Poland, and France.<sup>194</sup> Three months later, in June 2015, a lone gunman described as a 23-year-old Tunisian student, accessed a Tunisian beachside hotel in the popular resort of Sousse,

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<sup>189</sup> Humud, et al., *Al Qaeda-Affiliated Groups*.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid.

<sup>191</sup> Larémont, “Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb.”

<sup>192</sup> Ibid.

<sup>193</sup> Chris Steven, Kareem Shaheen, and Mark Tran, “Tunis Museum Attack: 20 People Killed after Hostage Drama at Tourist Site,” *Guardian*, March 18, 2015, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/mar/18/eight-people-killed-in-attack-on-tunisia-bardo-museum>.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid.

killing 38 tourists, most of them British; another 20 people were injured. Initial media reports indicated that the two men involved in the attack “had been radicalized in Tunisia and trained in an Islamist militant camp in Libya in the weeks before the attack.”<sup>195</sup> ISIS claimed responsibility for that attack, which of course compounds the security environment of the region.<sup>196</sup>

#### **4. International Community Intervention in the Maghreb**

Because AQIM terror activities cover a number of countries, the international community has endeavored similarly to apply approaches that cover a wide area. The U.S. government, for example, has been conducting several initiatives in the Maghreb to counter AQIM and other violent extremists in that region. In 2002, the U.S. State Department launched the Pan-Sahel Initiative (PSI) to bolster the military, border security, and counterterrorism capacities of Mauritania, Mali, Niger, and Chad. The security personnel of these countries are supposed to improve their capacity in tracking “movement of people and goods across and within their borders through training, equipment and cooperation.”<sup>197</sup> In 2005, the U.S. government announced another program called Trans Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP). This program focuses on “containing and marginalizing terrorist organizations by strengthening individual country and regional counterterrorism capabilities, enhancing and institutionalizing cooperation among the region’s security and intelligence organizations, promoting democratic governance and discrediting terrorist ideology.”<sup>198</sup> Further still, this program is intended to make sure that the affected countries improve their capacity to disrupt and deny terrorists from recruiting, training, and using safe havens for terror

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<sup>195</sup> Farah Samti and Carlotta Gall, “Tunisia Attack Kills at Least 38 at Beach Resort Hotel,” *New York Times*, June 26, 2015, [http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/27/world/africa/gunmen-attack-hotel-in-sousse-tunisia.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/27/world/africa/gunmen-attack-hotel-in-sousse-tunisia.html?_r=0).

<sup>196</sup> Ibid.

<sup>197</sup> U.S. Department of State, “Pan Sahel Initiative,” November 7, 2002, <http://2001-2009.state.gov/s/ct/rls/other/14987.htm>.

<sup>198</sup> U.S. State Department, “Programs and Initiatives: Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP),” n.d., <http://www.state.gov/j/ct/programs/index.htm#TSCTP>.

activities.<sup>199</sup> All these programs are aimed at making these regions more governed and secure since instability in any of one of them is likely to generate ripples to others.

Although TSCTP is led by the State Department, the issues that concern the military are implemented by the Department of Defense (DOD) program Operation Enduring Freedom Trans-Sahara (OEF-TS) that provides counterterrorism training and equipment like vehicles, radios and field gear other than weapons to the affected countries. Because of this program, the U.S. military has been able to train four rapid-reaction companies comprising around 150 soldiers each in Niger, Chad, Mali, and Mauritania. These companies act as the core of forces tasked with control of borders, curtail smuggling of narcotics and arms, and general neutralization of transnational terrorists.<sup>200</sup>

Recognizing that AQIM was having a destabilizing effect on Mali by allying with the Tuareg and other militias that have always threatened to move south and take over the capital city Bamako, the government of Mali in 2010 initiated a plan called the Special Program for Peace, Security and Development in Northern Mali (PSPSDN). The program involved 3,000 military personnel and other development officers with an aim of reinstating security and government presence in the north.<sup>201</sup> This program was later supported by France (former colonial master) and the European Union (EU) through the provision of finance, military training of Malian troops, technical personnel, and equipment.<sup>202</sup> For example, the EU provides about 20.4 million euros annually to Mali in support of PSPSDN, and this kind of assistance has been extended to other countries in the region to counter AQIM influence and fight terrorism in general. In 2011, the EU provided 450 million euros to benefit the Sahelian countries of Mali, Niger, and

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<sup>199</sup> John Rollins, *Al Qaeda and Affiliates: Historical Perspective, Global Presence, and Implications for U.S. Policy*, CRS Report No. R41070 (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2011), <http://fas.org/sgp/crs/terror/R41070.pdf>.

<sup>200</sup> Larémont, "Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb."

<sup>201</sup> Ibid.

<sup>202</sup> Ibid.

Mauritania and 200 million euros for North African countries of Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia.<sup>203</sup>

In 2013, the UN also reacted to the situation in Mali by establishing the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). This was pursuant to UNSC Resolution 2100 (2013) intended for restoring state presence in northern Mali and supporting other institutions of government in order to achieve political stability in the whole country.<sup>204</sup> MINUSMA was further mandated to “support the transitional authorities of Mali in the stabilization of the country by focusing on major population centers and lines of communication, protecting civilians, human rights monitoring, the creation of conditions for the provision of humanitarian assistance and the return of displaced persons, the extension of State authority, and the preparation of free, inclusive, and peaceful elections.”<sup>205</sup> The UN is devising these means of establishing a stable government in Mali so that the country does not degenerate into a failed state, which would lead to further destabilization of the entire region.

Considering that AQIM and other extremist groups would want a chaotic, ungoverned area in which to build their strength, it is only such concerted efforts of the stakeholders that are already in place that can curtail their agenda of destabilizing the Maghreb and exporting terrorism globally.

### **C. BOKO HARAM**

An insurgency that initially began as an Islamic religious sect in northeastern Nigeria in early 2002, Boko Haram embarked on a violent campaign with the goal of uprooting government presence and what it deemed to be Western influences in the area and replacing it with an Islamic state. The group has since carried out horrendous terrorist

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<sup>203</sup> Ibid.

<sup>204</sup> United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), “Supporting Political Process and Helping Stabilize Mali,” n.d., <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/minusma/>.

<sup>205</sup> United Nations, “MINUSMA Mandate,” n.d., <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/minusma/mandate.shtml>.

attacks against the population, including shootings, bombings, and abductions threatening the legitimacy and unitary existence of Nigeria as a state.<sup>206</sup>

## 1. Background

As an insurgent group, Boko Haram was founded in 2002 in the town of Maiduguri, which is the capital of Borno State in northeast Nigeria. The founder of the group was known as Ustaz Mohammed Yusuf, and initially, the group was called *al-Sunnah wal Jamma*, which in Arabic means “Followers of Muhammad’s Teachings.”<sup>207</sup> At the beginning, the group presented itself as a religious sect, claiming to be fighting societal evils like corruption and immorality. It also proclaimed its belief in Sharia—Islamic law. This branding of the group attracted a variety of followers to it, including university students from the area. The group recruited vigorously through preaching and targeting of young people in particular. As the group widened in other neighboring states like Yobe and Bauchi, many young people dropped out of school to join. Some administrators of government institutions and university lecturers also joined the group.<sup>208</sup>

Within two years of its founding, Boko Haram grew large and moved its base from Maiduguri to Kanamma, a remote area in Yobe State, near the border with Niger. Boko Haram preferred calling their headquarter “Afghanistan” as a sign of admiration for the Taliban and cherished being referred to as such.<sup>209</sup> The group delighted in these two names as an indicator of the level of Islamist extremism they were capable of unleashing.

In Yobe, the group started behaving like a state within a state by enforcing Sharia—which meant prescribing a strict legal code that involved “amputation of limbs

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<sup>206</sup> Julia McQuaid and Patricio Asfura-Heim, *Rethinking the U.S. Approach to Boko Haram: The Case for a Regional Strategy* (Arlington, VA: CNA Analysis and Solutions, 2015).

<sup>207</sup> Olusoji Akomolafe, “Nigeria and the Emergency of Boko Haram: Anatomy of a Weak State,” in *Africa in the New World Order: Peace and Security Challenges in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Olayiwola Abegunrin (New York: Lexington Books, 2014), 34–35.

<sup>208</sup> Akomolafe, “Nigeria and the Emergency of Boko Haram,” 35.

<sup>209</sup> Michael Tanchum, “Al Qaeda’s West African Advance: Nigeria’s Boko Haram, Mali’s Tuareg, and the Spread of Salafi Jihadism,” *Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs* 6, no. 2 (2012): 75–90, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/23739770.2012.11446504>.

for stealing, stoning to death for adultery, and public flogging for drinking alcohol.”<sup>210</sup> The group also opposed Western education, modern science, and banking, and leaders maintained that all Muslims should eschew their way of life be it economic, social, or political as long as it manifested Western values. At this point, the name Boko Haram became prominent. *Boko* is a word from the Hausa language of West Africa that means “Western or non-Islamic education,” while *Haram* is an Arabic word meaning “sin/abomination.”<sup>211</sup> Thus the name well reflects the group’s antipathy toward Western-style education or the teachings of tolerance, secularism, diversity, and so forth.

In an attempt to assert its presence, in 2004, Boko Haram’s core leadership moved back to Maiduguri and set up a mosque called Ibn Thaimiyya Islamic Centre. The group declared the center as its operational headquarters and demanded that all states in northern Nigeria adopt Sharia. That is when local leaders and the Nigerian government realized that Boko Haram was a security and political threat that needed to be countered.

It is at this particular period that the government learned that the group was in possession of military hardware for its defense. Security forces attacked and seemed to have neutralized it at first. But in the subsequent period, Boko Haram continued to carry out attacks on government institutions, especially targeting police stations. In response to such continuous attacks, the Nigerian government launched a major assault on the group headquarters at Maiduguri in 2009, killing around 700 of its followers and destroying the mosque. During that assault, Mohammed Yusuf, the founder of the group, was arrested and detained by police; he later died in what is believed to have been an extrajudicial execution.<sup>212</sup>

In the wake of Yusuf’s death, Abubakar Shekau assumed the leadership of Boko Haram and radicalized the group further. Attacks on police stations also continued, and now, the group demanded that Sharia be adopted in the whole of Nigeria.<sup>213</sup> Shekau was also quick to develop links with Al Qaeda. When the group attacked the United Nations

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<sup>210</sup> Akomolafe, “Nigeria and the Emergency of Boko Haram,” 35.

<sup>211</sup> Ibid.

<sup>212</sup> Akomolafe, “Nigeria and the Emergency of Boko Haram,” 35–36.

<sup>213</sup> Ibid., 36.



headquarters in Nigeria's capital city of Abuja in 2011, using a car bomb that killed nine people and injured 80 others,<sup>214</sup> authorities realized that Boko Haram, by any other name, was no longer a local Islamic extremist group but an international terrorist organization.<sup>215</sup>

## 2. Organization and Leadership of Boko Haram

At the helm of Boko Haram leadership is “an *Amir ul-Aam* (Commander in Chief)—Abubakar Shekau.”<sup>216</sup> Shekau is responsible only to a *Shura* (council) of commanders who are considered confidants in the organization. The Shura includes Boko Haram senior regional commanders and representatives of other extremist groups in the region like AQIM.<sup>217</sup> In towns that are captured by Boko Haram, the group installs an Amir in charge of command and administration of the town and surrounding villages. In most cases, the Amir must have been born in that particular town or area.<sup>218</sup> The Amirs have below them members of cells responsible for different tasks like bomb making, kidnapping, and bank robbery, among other things.

The bulk of Boko Haram members are of the Kanuri ethnic group to which Shekau belongs. Like many insurgent groups, Boko Haram's exact strength is unknown, but the U.S. State Department estimates the number to be in thousands, and Cameroon authorities estimate the group to be 10,000 to 20,000 members strong.<sup>219</sup> Among its members are jihadists from Chad, Mauritania, Niger, Somalia, and Sudan. Most of the soldiers in Boko Haram ranks are young people in the age range of 30 years, but children from 9 to 15 years of age are also recruited into the group and “forced to traffic weapons,

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<sup>214</sup> Ibid., 33–36.

<sup>215</sup> Ibid., 33.

<sup>216</sup> Yossef Bodansky, *The Boko Haram and Nigerian Jihadism*, ISPSW Strategy Series: Focus on Defense and International Security, no. 318 (Berlin: Institut für Strategie- Politik- Sicherheits- und Wirtschaftsberatung, 2015).

<sup>217</sup> Ibid.

<sup>218</sup> Amnesty International, *‘Our Job is to Shoot, Slaughter and Kill’: Boko Haram’s Reign of Terror in North-East Nigeria* (London: Amnesty International, 2015).

<sup>219</sup> Patricio Asfura-Heim and Julia McQuaid, *Diagnosing the Boko Haram Conflict: Grievances, Motivations, and Institutional Resilience in Northeast Nigeria*, DOP-2014-U-009272-FINAL (Alexandria, VA: Center for Naval Analyses, 2015).

carry stolen items, and hide guns after attacks.”<sup>220</sup> Generally, the group has always depended on abductions to replenish its rank and file, though in its initial stages, some young people are known to have joined it due to unemployment and religious convictions. Of late, girls as young as 12 years old have been forced to act as suicide bombers especially in markets, bus stations, and other areas where people congregate.<sup>221</sup>

Currently, Boko Haram has expanded its area of operation to most states in northern Nigeria including Borno, Adamawa, Kaduna, Bauchi, Yobe, and Kano. In addition, the group has infiltrated parts of South Nigeria including the nation’s capital Abuja and major towns like Lagos to carry out attacks. It has also carried out raids and kidnappings in Cameroon, Niger, and Chad. When carrying out attacks, the group employs both guerilla and terrorist tactics by “use of IEDs, targeted assassinations, ambushes, drive-by shootings, suicide bombings, car bombs and kidnappings.”<sup>222</sup> It is also fond of attacking and burning down churches so as to instigate religious tensions between Christians and Muslims.<sup>223</sup>

During its initial stages, Boko Haram was known to receive funds from external Salafist organizations, and such money was used to fund microcredit schemes for the followers. At times, followers might get some handouts including food to win them over to Boko Haram’s cause. But as the group increasingly turned violent, it started financing its operations using criminal methods like bank robberies, allowing its members to be hired for assassination missions and trafficking of drugs and illegal weapons.”<sup>224</sup> Boko Haram at times uses extortion, whereby various individuals are threatened with death through telephone calls if they do not give a certain amount of money to the group.

In addition, recently, some government investigations have linked the Nigerian Diaspora living in Pakistan, Europe, and the United States to money transfers intended to

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<sup>220</sup> Ibid.

<sup>221</sup> “Shocking Increase in Use of Child Suicide Bombers by Boko Haram,” A World at School, May 27, 2015, <http://www.aworldatschool.org/news/entry/shocking-increase-in-use-of-child-suicide-bombers-by-boko-haram-1989>.

<sup>222</sup> Asfura-Heim and McQuaid, “Diagnosing the Boko Haram Conflict.”

<sup>223</sup> Ibid.

<sup>224</sup> Ibid.

support Boko Haram activities.<sup>225</sup> The increased volatility of Boko Haram also points to possible assistance in terms of material and training from other jihadi extremist groups in Niger, Mali, the greater Sahel, and even Somalia.<sup>226</sup> It is believed that such connection to external jihadi groups has given Boko Haram the capacity to assemble IEDs and train suicide bombers. U.S. Africa Command officials have in the past also indicated that AQIM and Boko Haram are “likely sharing funds, training, and explosive materials.”<sup>227</sup>

### **3. Boko Haram Terror in Nigeria and Neighboring Countries**

Scholars and policy makers have been trying to comprehend fully how Boko Haram has been able to terrorize Nigeria for more than a decade now, yet Nigeria is one of the strongest economies on the African continent. In fact, Nigeria is not only strong economically but also ranked fourth among the 10 strongest militaries in Africa.<sup>228</sup> On the other hand, the country transitioned to democracy in 1999 following a string of military regimes that left it a weak state at the same time. This weakness is characterized by high levels of poverty, corruption, and unemployment that the terrorists seem to exploit.<sup>229</sup>

For example a World Bank report in 2011 indicated that “54.7 percent of the nation’s population was lives in abject poverty.”<sup>230</sup> Unemployment and underemployment levels in the country are also high, mostly affecting the young population. For example, the Nigeria National Bureau of Statistics indicates that unemployment increased from less than 10 million people in 2006 to about 17 million in 2011. Further still, the percentage of the unemployed according to age distribution is

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<sup>225</sup> Ibid.

<sup>226</sup> Ibid.

<sup>227</sup> Ibid.

<sup>228</sup> Global Fire Power, “African Militaries Ranked by Military Power,” last updated August 15, 2015, <http://www.globalfirepower.com/countries-listing-africa.asp>.

<sup>229</sup> Hakeem Onapajo and Ufo Okeke Uzodike, “Boko Haram Terrorism in Nigeria,” *Africa Security Review* 21, no. 3 (2012): 24–39, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10246029.2012.687693>.

<sup>230</sup> Ibid., 32.

more than 35 percent of Nigerians aged 15 to 25 years and about 22 percent for ages 25 to 44 years.<sup>231</sup>

Beyond these circumstances, Boko Haram also exploits Nigeria's vast, porous, and largely ungoverned borders for its terrorist ends.<sup>232</sup> For example, Boko Haram is said to be fond of loading weapons on top of camels disguised as if grazing in order to enter Nigeria from Chad and Niger.<sup>233</sup> The group is also said to have exploited state weakness and areas that are remote to set up bomb-making factories. In April 2011, a bomb-making factory was discovered in the Rafin Guza area of Kaduna state, while another similar one was also discovered in September 2011 in Niger state in a village nicknamed "Chechnya,"<sup>234</sup> after the region in Russia that is known for being a hotbed of Islamist extremism and separatism.

The geography of the area where terror groups operate has also been a challenge to security forces. The majority states of Borno, Yobe, Gombe, and Bauchi where Boko Haram operates have part of their territories in Sambisa Forest at the border with Chad. This forest is a game reserve covering an area of 60,000 square kilometers northeast of Nigeria, and Boko Haram has been using it as safe haven where they train, recuperate, and spring to carry out attacks and then retreat back.<sup>235</sup> Also on the eastern border with Cameroon, there are the Mandara Mountains, which are also considered hard-to-reach areas.<sup>236</sup> Considering that the Nigerian government already has institutional weaknesses like corruption even among security forces, provision of law enforcement in these mountainous and porous borders becomes troublesome, rendering such places ungoverned. It therefore is no surprise that Boko Haram has made such places their home

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<sup>231</sup> Abubakar A. Mustapha, "United States-Nigeria Relations: Impact on Nigeria's Security" (master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2014).

<sup>232</sup> Ibid.

<sup>233</sup> Onapajo and Uzodike, "Boko Haram Terrorism in Nigeria."

<sup>234</sup> Ibid.

<sup>235</sup> Bodunrin Kayode, "Inside Nigeria's Sambisa Forest, the Boko Haram Hideout Where Kidnapped School Girls Are Believed to Be Held," *Guardian*, April 29, 2014, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/apr/29/nigeria-sambisa-forest-boko-haram-hideout-kidnapped-school-girls-believed-to-be-held>.

<sup>236</sup> Ibid.

and a launch pad for terror acts in Nigeria and neighboring countries—Cameroon, Niger, and Chad.

At the end of 2013, Boko Haram carried out large-scale attacks on villages and later targeted schools, churches, bus stations, and markets. According to Amnesty International, in 2013 Boko Haram “conducted more than 100 deadly attacks, killing more than 1,350 civilians.”<sup>237</sup> Early in 2014 alone, Boko Haram is known to have killed 2,053 people in major areas of its operations in northeast Nigeria.<sup>238</sup> Later in December 2014, the group is also known to have pillaged towns of Madagali and Adamawa where it abducted an especially high number of boys and men and killed those who tried to resist. In another attack in January 2015, the group ransacked towns of Baga and Doro Baga, where it destroyed about 3,700 houses and massacred numerous people.<sup>239</sup>

Besides killings and destruction, the group has been abducting and raping women and girls in its areas of operation. One incident in April 2015 showed the level of savagery of the group when it abducted 276 girls from the Government Secondary School in Chibok, Borno State, and took them to Sambisa Forest where some were married off to fighters and others sold into slavery.<sup>240</sup> With this kind of violence, according to the International Organization for Migration (IOM) by February 2015, around 1.2 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) were taking shelter in the most affected northeast states of Adamawa, Bauchi, Gombe, Taraba, Yobe, and Borno. In Cameroon, since December 2014, Boko Haram has displaced 117,000 persons and in Niger, 50,000, while in Chad, 14,500 people have also been forced to flee their homes.<sup>241</sup> So far, Boko Haram’s “campaign of terror is estimated to have killed more than 20,000 people between 2009 and early 2015.”<sup>242</sup>

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<sup>237</sup> Amnesty International, *Our Job is to Shoot*.

<sup>238</sup> David Cook, *Boko Haram: A New Islamic State in Nigeria* (Houston, TX: James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy, Rice University, 2014).

<sup>239</sup> Amnesty International, *Our Job is to Shoot*.

<sup>240</sup> Ibid.

<sup>241</sup> Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, *Boko Haram’s Terror Ripples through the Region*, Briefing Paper (Geneva: IDMC, April 2015).

<sup>242</sup> Samuel Oyewole, “Boko Haram: Insurgency and the War against Terrorism in the Lake Chad Region,” *Strategic Analysis* 39, no. 4 (2015): 428–32, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09700161.2015.1047227>.

Faced with this kind of terrorist threat, the Nigerian army has been struggling to keep Boko Haram restricted to the northern states, but it has failed to stop the brutality. There have been reports of soldiers on the frontlines complaining about insufficient logistical support and equipment. Their salaries are also said not to be paid in a timely fashion,<sup>243</sup> at times going for months before they could be paid.<sup>244</sup> In one incident in 2014 in Maiduguri where Boko Haram terrorism is centered, soldiers complained that commanders were slashing their allowances for dangerous field duties by 50 percent at times. When their leaders tried to calm them down, the soldiers became riotous by shooting randomly. Some soldiers died, and others were arraigned before the court martial.<sup>245</sup>

There have been reports of both political and military leaders who benefit from the general insecurity in the country. For example, top leadership in each of the 36 Nigeria states receives about \$4.5 million per month as a “security fund” which at times ends up on their personal accounts.<sup>246</sup> The government has also been unable to get actionable intelligence from the local community because the Muslim population in those areas has lost trust in the government. The local population accuses the government of being arbitrary and at the same time fears reprisals from Boko Haram if they reveal information about the group. More broadly, the federal government of Nigeria is said to be facing structural problems including “lack of coordination and cooperation between security agencies; corruption; misallocation of resources; limited requisite databases; the slow pace of the judicial system; and lack of sufficient training for prosecutors and judges to implement anti-terrorism laws.”<sup>247</sup>

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<sup>243</sup> Asfura-Heim and McQuaid, “Diagnosing the Boko Haram Conflict.”

<sup>244</sup> Kingsley Omonobi, “Fear Grips Military over Non-Payment of Salaries,” *Vanguard*, October 29, 2011, <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2011/10/fear-grips-military-over-non-payment-of-salaries/>.

<sup>245</sup> Philip Ikita, “Corruption in Nigeria, not Just Boko Haram, Is at the Root of Violence,” *Guardian*, July 11, 2014, <http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/poverty-matters/2014/jul/11/boko-haram-nigeria-violence-corruption-security>.

<sup>246</sup> Asfura-Heim and McQuaid, “Diagnosing the Boko Haram Conflict.”

<sup>247</sup> Ibid.

Amid all this turmoil, in 2013, a number of communities from the affected northern states created vigilante groups comprising especially young men purposely to counter Boko Haram. These groups are known as the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF), and they operate closely with the security services. However, in some instances they become targets of the Boko Haram terror machinery.<sup>248</sup>

#### **4. International Community Response to Boko Haram**

Considering the brutality which Boko Haram has been visiting on Nigeria and neighboring countries, and in light of its alliance with both local and international terrorist groups, the international community has made efforts to curtail Boko Haram's activities. For example in 2013, the group was designated a foreign terrorist organization by the UNSC, United States, United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, Turkey, and the European Union. In the same year, all the sixteen "member states of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) adopted a sub-regional counterterrorism strategy" aimed at combating terrorism in West Africa.<sup>249</sup> The ECOWAS strategy emphasizes international cooperation in the area of intelligence, investigation, prosecution, and counterterrorism operations. Its implementation plan calls for strengthening "cross-border cooperation among law-enforcement agencies and elimination of safe havens for terrorists and other criminals."<sup>250</sup>

The affected countries have also formed the Multinational Joint Task Force (MJTF) aimed at patrolling the common borders of Nigeria, Niger, and Chad so as to curtail the mobility of Boko Haram. In response to this MJTF arrangement, in January 2015, Nigeria was able to deploy more than 25,000 troops to the northeastern part of the country, while Cameroon deployed about 7,000 troops in its northern region. Chad has

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<sup>248</sup> Ibid.

<sup>249</sup> Oyewole, "Boko Haram: Insurgency and the War against Terrorism."

<sup>250</sup> Ebere R. Adigbo, "The New ECOWAS Counterterrorism Strategy and Arms Trade Treaty," *International Affairs and Global Strategy* 25 (2014), <http://www.iiste.org/Journals/index.php/IAGS/article/viewFile/15489/15897>.

also contributed troops to counter Boko Haram by deploying medium contingents of 2,000 and 2,500 troops to neighboring Cameroon and Nigeria respectively.<sup>251</sup>

There are other international players like Israel, France, the United Kingdom, South Africa, Russia, and China offering training and arms procurement to Nigeria and its neighbors, but these measures seem to lack coordination.<sup>252</sup> In March 2015, the AU authorized a regional force of up to 10,000 military and other personnel to combat Boko Haram. The AU is still seeking further authorization for the mission from the UNSC.<sup>253</sup> On the other hand, although the United States has been in partnership with Nigeria in counterterrorism programs for some time, the tempo of cooperation waned around 2011, when Washington raised concerns about Nigeria's human rights record and institutional corruption.<sup>254</sup> But still, the United States is offering assistance through AFRICOM's annual Flintlock exercise in Chad by training and offering equipment under the auspices of the interagency Trans-Sahara Counter-Terrorism Partnership (TSCTP).<sup>255</sup>

Additionally, following the March 2015 presidential elections that saw Mohammed Buhari ascend to power, Washington has been reviewing its security cooperation with Nigeria for the better. In July 2015, after President Buhari's meeting with President Obama at the White House, Washington pledged to offer support to Nigeria in the fight against violent extremist groups. Currently, the United States has already committed \$5 million to the fight against Boko Haram.<sup>256</sup>

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<sup>251</sup> Oyewole, "Boko Haram: Insurgency and the War against Terrorism."

<sup>252</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>253</sup> Lauren Ploch Blanchard and Christopher M. Blanchard, *Nigeria's Boko Haram and the Islamic State*, CRS Insights IN10242 (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, March 2015), <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/IN10242.pdf>.

<sup>254</sup> Oyewole, "Boko Haram: Insurgency and the War against Terrorism."

<sup>255</sup> Blanchard and Blanchard, *Nigeria's Boko Haram*.

<sup>256</sup> "Obama Pledges Support for Nigeria's Fight against Militias," BBC, July 20, 2015, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-33600681>.



#### **D. CONCLUSION**

Al-Shabaab in Somalia, AQIM in the Maghreb, and Boko Haram in Nigeria have exploited ungoverned spaces and state weakness or failure to spread their agenda of Islamic extremism by using terror as a weapon. The three extremist groups are determined to create Islamic states in the countries where they operate, and they continue with the desire of creating caliphates in their respective regions.

Like the LRA that originated in northern Uganda and has been exploiting the existence of ungoverned spaces and other survival methods like killings and abductions of young girls and children for enslavement and filling their ranks in Central Africa, Al-Shabaab, AQIM, and Boko Haram have also perfected the art of mass murder, kidnappings, and abductions in order to sustain their terror machinery. The linkage the three groups have created with Al Qaeda and ISIS increase the level of the threats they pose.

Bearing in mind that the kind of terrorism associated with these groups is transnational in nature, it is imperative that their terrorism agenda is confronted and contained before the groups gain more strength and territory. And because the affected countries and regions might not have the requisite capacity to deal with these threats, regional and international responses are the best suited options of combating this transnational terrorism.

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#### **IV. EVALUATION OF POLICY FRAMEWORKS IN ADDRESSING THE PROBLEM OF UNGOVERNED SPACES**

While ungoverned spaces at times can be synonymous with failed states, it is also true that ungoverned spaces can exist in relatively strong states as well; after all, not every nook and cranny in any country can be policed at all times.<sup>257</sup> But there tends to be general agreement that if a state is unable to provide certain essential services to its citizens, then it is ungoverned and certainly weak, if not failed. According to Akomolafe, the services that a state ought to deliver include: “(a) provision of individual and collective security; (b) promotion of a civil society; (c) delivery of medical and health care; [and] (d) regulation of money and the banking system.”<sup>258</sup> As the earlier chapters of this thesis have made clear, terrorists can and do thrive in the ungoverned spaces where the state cannot or will not see to such basic requirements of the people.

In addition, states have certain obligations to their neighbors and the international community. It has been demonstrated in Somalia and the Central African Republic that weak/failed states that have reached critical points where they cannot rebuild themselves can have ripple effects, destabilizing not only their neighbors but also the entire region if left unchecked. In this sense, ungoverned spaces may be contagious.

This chapter therefore evaluates policy options for any intervention process intended to rebuild states and eradicate ungoverned spaces. Schneckener provides four strategies in his analysis of “the effects of international involvement in areas of limited statehood: liberalization, institutionalization, civil society, and security.”<sup>259</sup> These strategies are the basis of this evaluation.

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<sup>257</sup>As previously mentioned in Chapter I, when analyzing ungoverned spaces, not only are failed states the area of focus, but also border areas and inner cities of strong states like the United States and some suburbs in France that tend to harbor criminals.

<sup>258</sup> Akomolafe, “Nigeria and the Emergency of Boko Haram,” 30.

<sup>259</sup> Schneckener, “State Building or New Modes of Governance?,” 236.

## A. LIBERALIZATION STRATEGY

Liberalization Strategy posits that by the time a state collapses, the vital institutions will also have collapsed; therefore, it is important that the building process begins with conducting free and fair elections, allowing political parties to operate and encourage reforms in the areas of the economy, privatization and integration in the world economy.<sup>260</sup> However, considering that states that are emerging from conflict are normally polarized on ethnic grounds, democratization alone may not work. In fact, liberalization or democratization without national unity often works counter to the goals of peace and stability.

For example, when the Saddam regime was toppled during the Iraq war in 2003, the international community encouraged the country to hold elections and build a new government. However, the rifts between the Sunnis and Shias widened, and the country has continued to experience instability, notably at the hands of ISIS. It is believed that many Shia leaders and militiamen spent most of their years outside Iraq during Saddam's reign. Once he was toppled, these former refugees now wanted revenge. The Sunnis, feeling beleaguered, have taken to terrorism or at least support the project to create the so-called Islamic Caliphate.<sup>261</sup>

A similar situation has been playing in the Central African Republic, a country characterized by military coups. Starting with independence in the 1960s, the politics of the country was dominated by southerners—and Christians, for that matter. But in 2013 when *Seleka* rebels—mainly Muslims from the north of the country—overthrew the government, the dynamics changed. (*Seleka* means “coalition” in one of the Central African dialects. By implication, *Seleka* is just a coalition of rebels.) The Christians formed an armed group called anti-*balaka* (meaning “anti-machete”) as self-defense

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<sup>260</sup> Ibid., 237.

<sup>261</sup> Patrick Martin, “The Fissures That Divide Iraq Are Widening, and May Soon Tear It Apart,” *Globe and Mail*, February 6, 2015, <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/world/the-fissures-that-divide-iraq-are-widening/article22831471/>.

vigilantes when Seleka rebels moved south and took over Bangui, the capital city.<sup>262</sup> When the Seleka government ended in 2014 due to internal disorganization and pressure from the African Union and regional bodies, an interim president, Catherine Samba Panza, was elected. Christians then geared up for revenge and have been carrying out counter attacks on Muslim communities by killing and burning property.

Currently the country is under the protection of the UN Mission in Central Africa (MINUSCA), and the violence has waned some—but not entirely.<sup>263</sup> Still, the Central African Republic is planning for elections before the end of 2015. Conventional wisdom demands that what is needed at present is a continuous strengthening of the MINUSCA, the eventual disarmament of militias, and the formation of the national army and police with a national character, all of which would, in fact, be in line with the MINUSCA mandate.<sup>264</sup> For all intents and purposes, such mandates are always good on paper but weak in implementation. In this way, the army and police would ensure the protection of life and property of citizens and hold elections afterward. At present, the elections may take place as planned, but the fractured society is likely either to remain or see its divisions aggravated.

When it comes to liberalizing the economy, the belief is that because conflicts that take place in ungoverned spaces target both unemployed and underemployed youth for conscription and recruitment—as Chapter Three points out about Al-Shabaab in Somalia and Boko Haram in Nigeria—then if the economy is fixed, the non-state actors would not find potential recruits. The role of world financial bodies like the World Bank and the IMF is always prominent in fixing the broken economies of countries that have emerged from conflict through support for reconstruction programs. In the 1980s and the 1990s, such interventions were common in African countries emerging from civil wars. Uganda

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<sup>262</sup> International Crisis Group, *Central African Republic: The Roots of Violence*, Africa Report No. 230 (Brussels: International Crisis Group, 2015), <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/africa/central-africa/central-african-republic/230-central-african-republic-the-roots-of-violence.aspx>.

<sup>263</sup> Ibid.

<sup>264</sup> United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), “MINUSCA Mandate,” n.d., <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/minusca/mandate.shtml>. Note that the MINUSCA mandate provides detailed tasks that the mission is supposed to undertake.

was a beneficiary after the wars to oust Idi Amin and Milton Obote. The IMF helped the subsequent governments to revamp agriculture and carry out privatization and liberalization of the economy from state led to private ownership.<sup>265</sup>

Uganda embarked on Structuring and Adjustment Programs (SAPs), which included layoff of government workers in favor of a small but effective workforce. From 1992 to 1999, the government reduced public service personnel from 320,000 to 160,000 so as to use such savings to improve salaries.<sup>266</sup> During the same period, Uganda started the process of returning the property of Asians who had been expelled by Idi Amin, so as to revamp the economy.<sup>267</sup> Also, one of the measures that the international monetary bodies took to alleviate the collapse of the economy was to cancel some of the debts owed to them by offering what they called Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) debt relief in 1998.<sup>268</sup> To cut government spending on enterprises that were not performing well economically, the government had to privatize them. Such measures of privatization and liberalization coupled with some aid seem to have helped Uganda to achieve recovery from the perennial decline caused by war. For example, from 1992 to 1997, the country was already experiencing some reduction in poverty levels as the head count index of poverty fell from 56 percent to 44 percent.<sup>269</sup>

However, the challenge in fixing such economies is that they are always in shambles after suffering the effects of war. Thus, they take too long to right, and even when they are repaired, they barely can compete on the world stage. But at least this relief may mitigate factors that otherwise would leave conflict countries to further violence and lack of governance.

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<sup>265</sup> Ritva Reinika and Paul Collier (editors), *Uganda's Recovery: The Role of Farms, Firms, and Government* (The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/World Bank, Washington D.C., 2001), 24, <https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=KV1eOH9Jfj0C&oi=fnd&pg=PR9&dq=economic+liberalization+in+uganda&ots=20sTzmZ3VW&sig=1G9vXSi7YH5NUQf8hbEfZYJiAyc#v=onepage&q=economic%20liberalization%20in%20uganda&f=false>

<sup>266</sup> Reinika and Collier, *Uganda's Recovery*, 27.

<sup>267</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>268</sup> Ibid., 30.

<sup>269</sup> Ibid., 43.

## B. INSTITUTIONALIZATION STRATEGY

The advocates of the institutionalization strategy believe that once political institutions like parliament, the judiciary, and administrative councils are in place, then (good) governance will take root. Other features of this strategy are bodies like customs and immigration departments to strengthen border management, conflict-resolution measures like the establishment of traditional courts, and reconciliation mechanisms that can bring people together.<sup>270</sup> For example after the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, the government was faced with a large number of prisoners as genocide suspects, and the judicial system in Rwanda was overburdened. To be sure, the UN International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) was in place, but it could only handle a few high-profile cases. (The ICTR is based in Arusha, Tanzania.)<sup>271</sup>

This situation necessitated the revival of a local judicial system called *gacaca* in 1999 to handle the overflow cases. *Gacaca* is a traditional court system where locally elected judges try crimes that were committed during the genocide, ranging from overseeing massacres to failing to prevent massacres or looting during the genocide. Through the *gacaca*, the prisons were decongested and communities reconciled so as to live together. However, these measures are only supplementary to the conventional judicial system; they are intended to last only for a short period of time. But they seem to have eased the tension in Rwanda.<sup>272</sup>

The proponents of the institutionalization strategy contend that while the encouragement of democracy in a post-conflict environment is a good idea, it at times encourages “winner takes all” outcomes, where the dominant party or even ethnicity may dominate the minority, thus creating further divisions. To avoid such cleavages, compromise settlements like grand coalitions are encouraged. For example, during the 2007 general elections in Kenya, the outcome was contested, leading to violence and the

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<sup>270</sup> Schneckener, “State Building or New Modes of Governance?,” 241.

<sup>271</sup> Jean Bigagaza, Carolyne Abong, and Cecil Mukaburuga, “Land Scarcity, Distribution and Conflict in Rwanda,” in *Scarcity and Surfeit: The Ecology of Africa’s Conflicts*, eds. Jeremy Lind and Kathryn Sturman, 50–82 (Pretoria, South Africa: Institute for Security Studies, South Africa), <https://www.issafrica.org/pubs/Books/ScarcitySurfeit/Chapter2.pdf>.

<sup>272</sup> Ibid.

deaths of more than 1,000 people. Although the then-incumbent president, Mwai Kibaki, of the Party of National Unity (PNU) had been declared the winner, a coalition was forged after a negotiated settlement brokered by former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan. Ultimately, Kibaki's closest challenger, Raila Odinga, of the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) became the prime minister. The cabinet was also widened from the initial number of 17 of the ruling party to 42 in order to accommodate opposition politicians. ODM was an amalgamation of opposition parties that had rallied around Odinga to make a formidable opposition.<sup>273</sup> Following the formation of the coalition government, the tensions in Kenya eased.

The same power-sharing deals were undertaken in Zimbabwe when President Robert Mugabe's closest challenger, Morgan Tsvangirai, became prime minister after disputed elections in 2009. The deal for the coalition government provided for 16 cabinet posts from Tsvangirai's party—out of 31 cabinet spots.<sup>274</sup> Similarly, during the negotiations to end the civil war between Sudan and South Sudan that had persisted for more than 30 years, the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) signed between the protagonists in 2005 provided that the leader of the then-rebel group, the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), would be the vice president of Sudan and at the same time president of South Sudan; thereafter a referendum in South Sudan would be carried out to determine whether southerners wanted independence from Sudan.<sup>275</sup> This arrangement worked until 2006, when a referendum was carried out that called for the independence of South Sudan. Indeed, in 2011, South Sudan gained its independence.<sup>276</sup>

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<sup>273</sup> Otto Bakano, "Kenyan Leader Unveils Power-Sharing Cabinet," *Mail & Guardian*, April 14, 2008, <http://mg.co.za/article/2008-04-14-kenyan-leader-unveils-powersharing-cabinet>.

<sup>274</sup> Sebastien Berger and Peta Thorncroft, "Zimbabweans Celebrate as Morgan Tsvangirai Joins Robert Mugabe's Government," *Telegraph*, January 30, 2009, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/zimbabwe/4402139/Zimbabweans-celebrate-as-Morgan-Tsvangirai-joins-Robert-Mugabes-government.html>. Note that Tsvangirai fell out with Mugabe in 2013 and reverted to the mainstream opposition.

<sup>275</sup> UN Mission in Sudan (UNMIS), "Comprehensive Peace Agreement between the Government of the Republic of the Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Sudan People's Liberation Army (CPA-2005)," December 31, 2004, <https://unmis.unmissions.org/Portals/UNMIS/Documents/General/cpa-en.pdf>.

<sup>276</sup> Jeffrey Gettleman, "After Years of Struggle, South Sudan Becomes a Nation," *New York Times*, July 9, 2011, <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/07/10/world/africa/10sudan.html>.



The challenge with such arrangements is that they rely on the goodwill of particular leaders and the extent to which they are willing to keep their word. The coalitions are negotiated from the top, likely to impede the evolution of participatory democracy, which looks like mob rule from certain angles. Nevertheless, the coalitions have the effect of easing political tensions as has been witnessed in these countries.

### **C. CIVIL SOCIETY STRATEGY**

The civil society strategy is driven by the belief that when a country is emerging from an armed conflict, it needs a critical mass of people who are empowered and ready to transform it. All the disadvantaged and marginalized groups, including the victims of the conflict, should be the focus of attention because their empowerment is likely to translate into societal development. The provision of equal opportunities for all is paramount in this strategy.<sup>277</sup>

In this strategy, it is also believed that once the government promotes such universal freedoms as the freedom of speech, assembly, association, and the press, then people will articulate the ills that have always afflicted them so as to get solutions. The catch here is that once a society has been mobilized, then members will have been empowered to face the challenges of rebuilding their societies.<sup>278</sup>

In the same vein, external actors play a major role through the provision of humanitarian services like food aid, medical care, and trauma counseling for the war victims. The repatriation of refugees or the reintegration of child soldiers back into the community is also carried out by these external actors. UN agencies like UNICEF and other NGOs are always at the forefront of such activities. However, the challenge in this strategy is that these activities are likely to be sabotaged by non state actors when the conflict is still ongoing. As Chapter Three notes, in the early 1990s, when Somalia was facing a humanitarian catastrophe because of the war induced famine, the relief food meant for civilians was always being confiscated by warlords to feed their fighters and barter for weapons.

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<sup>277</sup> Schneckener, "State Building or New Modes of Governance?," 243.

<sup>278</sup> Ibid.

What's more, some NGOs have in some instances used conflict as a "cash machine" and may carry out some activities that undermine the efforts of other players to pacify ungoverned spaces. For example, in 2008, long after the LRA had moved from Uganda to Central Africa, the NGOs in Gulu district in northern Uganda discouraged people who were living in camps for the internally displaced from returning to their villages, claiming that it was easier to provide for them in the camps. At the same time, the government wanted the displaced people to move to their own land and grow crops for food and markets so as to be self-sustaining. In essence, the NGOs foresaw their relevance waning, which would lead to no funding of their activities.<sup>279</sup> Although the efforts of the civil society may be well intentioned in improving the lives of people in ungoverned spaces, the challenges from non-state actors and in the long run some of the actions of the NGOs involved may be counterproductive, as the scenarios in Somalia and Gulu indicate.

#### **D. SECURITY STRATEGY**

The security strategy is based on the premise that if a state cannot deliver the essential task of providing security, then sustainable development cannot take place. Proponents of this strategy further believe that when a state has collapsed or become ungovernable and there is need for external actors to intervene, then the focus should be on the restoration of the security apparatus—and monopoly use of force by the government.<sup>280</sup> Programs like demobilization of non-state actors, security-sector reform, training of armed forces—army, police, and border patrol units—are all important in this strategy so that the state can regain its sovereignty.<sup>281</sup> States like Afghanistan and Somalia that present destabilizing effects to neighbors and the international community fall under such a description.

The security strategy is occasionally tempting to policy makers as the best option to address the issue of ungoverned spaces in the belief that once order has been restored

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<sup>279</sup> Peter Labeja, "NGOs Accused of Frustrating Return of IDPs," URN, April 3, 2008, <http://ugandaradionetwork.com/story/ngos-accused-of-frustrating-return-of-idps>.

<sup>280</sup> Schneckener, "State Building or New Modes of Governance?," 239.

<sup>281</sup> *Ibid.*, 240.

in a state, then the other programs as mentioned in the other strategies can be carried out. In other words, the security strategy can establish the necessary basis for the others and the governance they entail. After 9/11, when it was established that Afghanistan was sheltering Osama bin Laden and Al Qaeda's top leadership as well as serving as a launch pad for transnational terrorism, the United States and the coalition forces had to drive out the Taliban regime.

However, while such interventions have the ability to dismantle the targeted regime, they may at the same time attract further resistance from hardliners and extremists by exploiting resentment of external forces and installed governments especially when these external forces have left. This drawback has been evident in Afghanistan, where the Taliban are currently regrouping in an attempt to regain cities and regions. In September this year, for example, the Taliban captured the city of Kunduz for the first time since they were thrown out of power in 2001. It should be noted that NATO forces scaled down from Afghanistan in 2014.<sup>282</sup>

In Somalia, the situation has not been very different. While the intervention of the AU under AMISOM has been able to drive out the Al-Shabaab from Mogadishu and other larger parts of Somalia, this has not translated fully into an orderly transitional political process. Divisions based on clans have persisted, and other institutional deficiencies like corruption have slowed stabilization. For example, according to the Corruption Index Barometer 2012, Somalia "is considered one of the world's most corrupt countries" in the world alongside Afghanistan and North Korea, sharing "a score of only eight out of 100 for transparency."<sup>283</sup> Al-Shabaab also continues to carry out asymmetric warfare in and outside Somalia. Some pundits on the Somalia conflict believe that given the nature of the clan system in the country, parliamentary democracy

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<sup>282</sup> Feroz Sultan and Folad Hamdard, "Afghan Taliban Seize Kunduz City Center in Landmark Gain," Reuters, September 29, 2015, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/09/29/us-afghanistan-attack-idUSKCN0RS0A820150929>.

<sup>283</sup> Simon Rogers, "Corruption Index 2012 from Transparency International: Find Out How Countries Compare," *Guardian*, December 5, 2012, <http://www.theguardian.com/news/datablog/2012/dec/05/corruption-index-2012-transparency-international>.

based on parties may take time to produce a stable system as it requires time and nurturing. Clans take precedence over unity required for party politics.<sup>284</sup>

Finally, one of the more potentially dangerous aspects of the security strategy is the tendency of the new leadership that has been installed to power in fractured states to use the security apparatus to suppress other dissenting political views and voices by associating them with either terrorists or armed groups. In such cases, the targeted groups are likely to escalate violence, thus turning it into a vicious cycle.<sup>285</sup> In short, the stability presented by the external intervention may be short-lived if emphasis is placed on security on the expense of other strategies. Even with such challenges, failing or collapsed states cannot be ignored.

Besides, under this strategy, when countries' security apparatus breaks down, bodies like the UN, the AU, and other regional organizations may have to intervene and separate the belligerents so that cease-fires or peace agreements can be enforced through peacekeeping missions.<sup>286</sup> Such interventions have been witnessed in the DRC, Kosovo, and Sudan in Darfur. When such missions are in place, programs like Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) of militias can take place in an effort to limit the monopoly of use of instruments of violence to government security agencies. For example, when the LRA shifted to Central Africa and threatened the security of that area, the AU intervened by setting up the AU-RTF to deal with this threat.<sup>287</sup> Later on, the United States joined the AU effort. This intervention has no doubt reduced LRA's capacity to spread terror in that region.

Similarly, regions that have become hot spots for terrorism proliferation due to Islamic extremism—like in East Africa because of Al-Shabaab and west/north Africa due to Boko Haram and AQIM—may be assisted through counterterrorism programs by

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<sup>284</sup> Afyare Abdi Elmi and Abdullah Barise, "The Somali Conflict: Root Causes, Obstacles, and Peace-Building Strategies," *African Security Review* 15, no. 1 (2006): 32–54, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10246029.2006.9627386>.

<sup>285</sup> Schneckener, "State Building or New Modes of Governance?," 240.

<sup>286</sup> *Ibid.*, 239–40.

<sup>287</sup> United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA), "Fight against the LRA," n.d., <http://unoca.unmissions.org/Default.aspx?ctl=Details&tabid=3760&mid=6487&ItemID=539864>.

strategic partners, like the United States is doing currently. There is Partnership for Regional East Africa Counterterrorism (PRACT), an initiative funded by the United States and intended to develop counterterrorism capacity and capabilities of countries of the region so as to combat violent extremism posed by Al-Shabaab and Al Qaeda and other extremist groups over both the short term and the long term. Areas of focus include training of militaries, improving border security, general enhancement of security organizations and improvement in democratic governance. Countries benefiting from PRACT include Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi, Sudan and South Sudan, Comoros, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Seychelles, and Somalia.<sup>288</sup> A similar program called the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP) is being undertaken by the United States in western and northern Africa to combat Boko Haram and AQIM and other extremist activities. Countries that are benefiting from TSCTP include some of those from the Maghreb—Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco. Others are from pan-Sahel like Nigeria, Niger, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Senegal, and Burkina Faso.<sup>289</sup>

These programs may not have eliminated terrorist groups in these regions, but these efforts certainly have curtailed their capacity to spread terror and expand. For example, in Somalia, thanks to AMISOM operations, Al-Shabaab has had losses including its top leadership through airstrikes, large territories, and revenue, which all hamper its operational capacity.<sup>290</sup>

## **E. CONCLUSION**

Ungoverned spaces require intervention from the international community and external assistance to make them viable again. However, as this chapter has demonstrated, the kind of assistance must be well thought out so that resources are channeled according to where they are needed most. As the examples of Iraq and Central Africa indicate, some societies that are factionalized on tribal or religious lines might not easily embrace electoral democracy in the short run. Such attempts might create further

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<sup>288</sup> U.S. State Department, “Country Reports on Terrorism 2014,” April 2015, <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/239631.pdf>.

<sup>289</sup> Ibid.

<sup>290</sup> Ibid.

cleavages. In which case, the strong pillars of the state like the army and police must be developed first so that they can guarantee security of person and property.

Additionally, other aspects emerge as important in the process of improving governance in societies/countries that have been ungoverned. The roles of NGOs, judicial systems, reconciliation methods, and economic interventions can transform communities so that they do not fall into a vicious cycle of violence. Examples in Uganda, Rwanda, Kenya, and Zimbabwe regarding these various aspects attest to that importance.

The problem of ungoverned spaces forms over a period of time. The strategies aimed at addressing the problem therefore must be diverse, as has been shown above. The provision of security is paramount in any society/country because without it nearly every aspect of life may come to a standstill. At the same time, once security has been provided, other aspects of institutional building must also be addressed because if they are not addressed, security will not be sustained. It is therefore logical that these strategies are interdependent and their application should be treated as such.

## V. CONCLUSION

The issue of ungoverned spaces has been and remains a major concern for all international security players given the fact that when states fail or cede some level of sovereignty, the consequences usually reverberate far and wide in destabilizing not only regions where they occur but also globally. The outcomes of state failure and lack of governance have been demonstrated in this study stretching from the horn of Africa to Central Africa and West and North Africa. The security challenges that ungoverned spaces present today may not be new, but the transnational and globalized nature of the current security environment presents to both policy makers and security experts new dimensions to consider and to contend with.

This study showed how extremist groups—Al-Shabaab, AQIM, and Boko Haram—use identical methods in carrying out their terror attacks. It also showed how they have been involved in efforts to coordinate their operations and linkage to the wider international terror network of Al Qaeda and ISIS. It also showed how the LRA has been coordinating with other outlaws like the Janjaweed of Sudan to trade in ivory for survival. This trend of extremist groups working together sets further security challenges. It is therefore imperative that in the future, further study could be conducted to determine the extent to which the post-Arab Spring security environment has aggravated the problem of ungoverned spaces and its implications not only in North Africa but sub-Saharan Africa as well.

When violent extremist groups turn young populations into killing machines, threaten to form whole regions into Islamic caliphates, they—and the ungoverned spaces that they exploit—become a matter of international concern. Fortunately, there have been policy frameworks designed to rectify the otherwise gloomy situation that is prevailing in ungoverned spaces. Beyond international cooperation through bilateral, regional, and multilateral arrangements that tend to mitigate the negative effects of ungoverned spaces, there are a number of aspects that affected states can always adopt to ameliorate the situation. These measures include embracing democratic practices to lessen violent confrontations; economic empowerment and general reduction of poverty levels; and

strengthening government institutions ranging from security, health, and education among others. Of course, Chapter Four showed there is no “magic bullet” to address the problem of ungoverned spaces; rather these policy prescriptions are interdependent and are likely to produce better results when their application is interlinked.

Thus, there seems to be a correlation between governed-ness and governance. It is no surprise that most violent extremist groups have operated with more or less impunity in areas that are less governed. Therefore, it makes sense when policy makers try all means to make states more viable and running. Interventions, whether security, economic, or humanitarian, may work as starting points, but when underlying structural causes of state failure like ethnic divisions, corrupt governments, unplanned large populations, and porous borders continue to manifest in most parts of the world, then we may still have to move in cycles of ungoverned-ness.

Finally, the use of ungoverned spaces by terrorist groups has far-reaching implications not only in the countries where they operate but also the regions and the international community because of the multiplier effect of terrorism that they are able to generate. Important to consider is that even when these groups may appear to be defeated or weakened, they can still reorganize and regain the potency to cause havoc as long as the states in which they operate still experience fragility. Therefore fixing ungoverned spaces should not be left to those fragile affected states; instead the international community should always take the lead.



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